

THE *47. 16 62*
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GREATNES


OF THE

Mystery of Godliness;

TOGETHER,

With *Hypocrisie* discovered in its
Nature and Workings.

By *Cuthbert Sydenham*, Minister
of the Gospel at *Newcastle*
upon *Tine*.

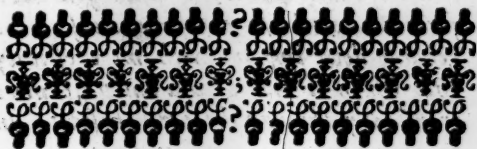
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L O N D O N,

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TO THE
Right VVorshipfull *William*
Johnson Maior of *Newcastle*,
With the Aldermen, Sheriff,
Common Councel, and the rest
of that famous Corporation.

Honoured and Beloved,



*It is not any vain desire to ap-
pear in Print that I present
you with these Sheets, but
these two reasons have prest
me therunto.*

*First, because I cannot now preach to
your ears, I would leave something before*

your eyes that might quicken up your spirits
to a holy remembrance of what you have
formerly heard; for careful and observant
reading doth imprint with more efficacy
that which it may be did but passe more
transiently through the ear; besides, in
reading a man may dwell on a notion until
he hath suckt the spirits of it, and yet not
lose the next, which in hearing is hazard-
ous: so that primarily my usefulness to you
(through sickness) in preaching hath pro-
voked me, that if possible I might be a lit-
tle useful to your souls by this.

2. I have attempted this work to leave a
character and testimony of my deep sense
I have of your great favours to me; you
have nursed me as a Parent his Child:
Now what have I to present you with but
even this spiritual mite, which is seconded
with many desires for your eternal welfare;
and this I must say, that I beleve never
more respects have been shown by any Cor-
poration in England to the most grave
and worthy Preachers among them, than
you have shewn to me, unworthy me. Thus
I have given you a short account of what
moved

moved me to this enterprize, I hope it will be candidly interpreted among you.

I have only one thing to adde (which all the Nation may take notice of and wonder) concerning your happiness, that these nine years, when all the Nation have been in a puzzle about errors, sects, and schismes, even almost to bloud, you have sate as in a Paradise, no disturbances in your Pulpits, no railings or disputings, Presbyterians and Independents preaching in the same place, fasting and praying together, in heavenly harmony, expressing nothing but kindness to each other, in their meetings ready to help each other; and as for the erreurs of the times that have disturbed so many Towns in England, it may be said of Newcastle as of Ireland, the Aire is so pure no such venomous creature can live there; and this hath been through the power of the Gospel, and your careful Government.

Now the Lord make you reach after immortality, take heed of this evil world. Oh that you may further prize and profit by that precious Gospel which shines among

you, and may this little Treatise adde one
cubit to your stature in grace, how will it
rejoyce the soul of him, who is

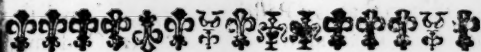
From my sick
Chamber in Ax-
yard in Kingstreet
in Westminster.

Yours to serve you in
the Gospel, if ever God
recover my strength.

Cuthbert Sydenham.

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The Greatness of the Mystery of Godlineffe, Opened in several Sermons.

SERMON I.

I Tim. 3. 16.

And without controversie great is the Mystery of Godlineffe, which is, God manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, beleevd on in the world, and received up into glory.



He Apostle in this Chapter sutes his Exhortation to the divers Offices in the Church, and laies down their particular qualifications who shall be fit for such places. God never calls any to places but he fits them, and he would have us look to whom he hath qualified. It is not enough that men have publick vote for publick places,

places, but they must have futable endowments, a Bishop that is a Pastour must be blamelesse; v. 2. So he that thinks to act for God, must have qualifications from God; Gods Call hath ever his blessing and assistance. Now that *Timothy* might take special notice of this, he tels him that he writ these things on purpose that he might know how to behave himself in the Church, which he calls the house of God, and the pillar and ground of truth, ver. 15. that is that which holds forth truth as the pillar doth the light that is set on it: The Apostle laies the weight of hie work, and all the Ministers of the Gospel, and heightens their Calling from the preciousnesse of the truth that is to be manifest by them; and at last breakes forth into the great truths which they are to manifest, which are undeniably the great mystery of Godlinesse in the world. *God was manifest in flesh, &c.*

So that this is the sum of all: pastors, and Teachers, and Elders, and all Officers of the Church, had need be men peculiarly qualified, that they may behave themselves as becomes them in the Church; for that is as a Pillar of truth, and the great Mystery of Godlinesse is opened among them, they are to hold forth that Godlinesse which is a great Mystery. And it is as much as if he had said, *Timothy*, I write these

these things to thee, and all the Ministers of the Gospel, that they look to themselves; for a great charge is committed to them, to be as pillars in Gods house, and to carry forth the greatest mystery in the heaven and earth, that upon which depends the great weight of Salvation. Oh, if these that are to dispense the Gospel, did but know their work, what a glorious and great Dispensation is committed to them, how would they labour to behave themselves in that great charge?

Here be many things observable in the words.

1. The Preface, or Porch.

2. The Fabrick it self.

In the Preface is 1. The manner of his speech, and that twofold: first, the affection he speaks it with, he is so as a man in rapture that speaks in pure sentences, *without Controversie*, &c. He breakes off as it were from all that he had formerly spoken, and sits down and wonders at the greatnesse of that Mystery which the Gospel held forth.

2. That he speaks of its Godlinesse.

3. The description he gives it, he calls it a Mystery, and that with this Adjunct, that it is a great Mystery.

4. The confidence he speaks it in, *without Controversie*, *ὁμολογούμεως*, *manifeste*, *ex confessa*,

fesse, without doubt or question it is so; none that ever knew God, or ever felt the power of it, but said it was a great mystery.

Then secondly, you have this Mystery unfolded, and cleared up in these severall particulars of it, which he deduceth to these six heads:

God manifested in the flesh.

Justified in the spirit.

Seen of Angels.

Preached unto the Gentiles.

Beleeved on in the World.

Received up into Glory.

So that here is Truth, and that truth is Godlinesse, and that godlinesse is a great Mystery, and all that is laid out in various manifestations of God. Here are many glorious things to be insisted on; all Divinity comprehended in these few lines, the very marrow and pith, the foundation and fountain of all that we need to know, or to be acquainted with. And before we come to Launch out in the Ocean, we must cast an eye upon the Connexion of the words.

Obser. First, That which the Apostle calls Truth in the former verse, he calls Godlinesse here; Truth is not a fancy or notion, but it is holinesse it self, and none can know Truth in the nature and power of it, but they must be godly.

First,

First, Truth is the pattern and platforme of Holineſſe, it is the mould of Godlineſſe ; that is godlineſſe which is conformable to divine truth ; Truth is Gods mind, and godlineſſe is a ſoul conformable unto that mind, or transformed into that truth ; therefore the Apoſtle when he would relate the godlineſſe of the *Romans*, *Rom. 6. 17.* he ſaith, they obeyed that doctrine or truth into the forme of which they were delivered, εἰς ὃν παρεδόθητε τύπον, he makes the truth of the Goſpel as a type, a mould into which they were caſt.

Secondly, godlineſſe is truth, becauſe truth works godlineſſe ; Chriſt prayes the Father to ſanctifie them with truth, *John 17. 17.* It is the nature of truth to ſanctifie and work holineſſe ; truth is light, and life, and doth as the Sun, Both enliven and enlighten all ſouls on whom its beams ſhine ; error never makes holy, though it may be in a holy perſon, and ſhadowed with the holineſſe in whom it is ; but all the truths of Chriſt they are as fire that convert ſouls to its own nature ; whatever holineſſe is in the ſoul is no more but truth digeſted, turned into life and ſpirit.

Uſe. So that firſt let not the world miſtake themſelves concerning truth. It is not enough that men have abundance of notions concerning God or Chriſt, except it be holy truth,

sanctifying truth, this world is growing exceeding knowing, men boast of many great and mysterious truths which they know, but where is godliness? Truth without godliness is an Oracle without a voice, a body without a soul, as letters in brass without life. Brethren, what is it for a man to have found a peece of Gold when he is hungry and can find no meat? It is clear men know little of truth, they are so unacquainted with godliness? that is truth indeed which moulds the soul into the nature of God, which draws a soul into pure fellowship with God, which elevates the spirit into the glory of God, which turnes all things into life and power in the soul, other things are but notions; to have truth written in thy Bible and not in thy heart, what is it? for thee to have a form of truth in thy understanding, the letters transcribed in thy fancy, and not be turned spiritually into that form, godliness is nothing else but truth baptized in the soul, truth with a new name; that soul hath not a sparkle of truth which hath not a motion of life from it, truth came out of Gods bosome, and is the manifestation of his life and glory, and it will turne the heart futable to that life.

Use 2. Would you know what it is to be godly, not to have a form of this and that way
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of Religion of our own making, but to be conformable to divine truth: as good principles and notions without divine impressions of it on the soul are nothing; so godliness without a principle of truth to lead it is superstition; as truth works godliness, so godliness lives answerable unto truth; godliness consists not in any form of worship set us by men, though never so glorious, but by being one with truth, in serving God after his own mind and heart.

Use 3. Again, know who are the knowing and the godly men; what those who barely and nakedly confess the Articles of faith, who beleeve in a cursory manner what is said of God and Christ in the Gospel; no, but those which are made godly by these truths. It is impossible for any to know Jesus Christ, and the mystery of the Gospel, but they must have the life of it in them; if men will judge as God doth of their knowledge by their hearts, how few knowing men shall we have in the world? God values mens knowledge by their affections, by the value they set on truth; all our knowledge and speculations of truth without godliness is but a humane knowledge of divine things; you know much, you see great mysteries of truth, what life, what spirit hath it put in you? If you have seen Jesus

Christ as the Center and substance of truth, where are the transformations, and the raisings of your souls after this Christ apprehended? When principles are turned into practice, and speculations into power, and notions into spirit then your truth is godliness.

Will you know the reason why there is so much profession of truth, and so little practice of godlinesse, why the heads of men have so out-grown their hearts?

I think it be this: either first that which men call truth is errour, or the fancies of their own braine, not the Vision on the mount: Or else, secondly, they have but the bare and leane apprehensions, do not see them in their own nature; men place Religion in knowledge, and godlinesse in a meere conceit; doubtlesse if truth were seene in her naked glory, without her hood, or gowne, only as she comes out of the bosome of Jesus Christ, the beames of her glory would pierce the very hearts and souls of men, and leave impressions of an immortall nature on their spirits. How can souls see Jesus Christ as the manifestation of God, behold him as one received up into glory, and sitting at the right hand of God, and have it as truth within him, and not be drawn out in strong desires of Communion with him, and have the reflections of his holiness and glory on

on the heart? What is godliness but God shining in light, and working in life in the soul? Take thy picture of truth which thou thinkest thou hast in thy understanding, and sit down and rejoyce in the high flown notions of God and Christ, (thou knowing Professor) while poor souls enjoy the life, and power, the beauty, and substance of all truth within their hearts.

Obs. 2. The second thing of worth is this; How full *Pauls* heart is when he begins to speak of the things of the Gospel; like a man that is full of grief or joy, longs to have vent, and breaks off on a sudden from his former discourses, so doth the Apostle; he was to swim out into a great deep, and his heart cannot hold, he speaks as a man overmarched with matter, that is faine to speak broken expressions, *without controversie, &c.*

High manifestations of God should be expressed with great affections; as God let out himself, so our hearts must be taken: a little love and admiration will not serve when God manifest himself in a mystery, the best frame of spirit a soul can be in when he is meditating, or to speak of Gospel-mysteries, is to be astonished at them, as one that knows not where to begin or end; you never have known the mysteries of God which have not admired them.

Use.

Use All the use I would make of this to you, is, to get affections futable to manifestations, to rise as God rises. Oh let not your hearts below when God is high in love and glory. Souls which are wrapt up in the bosome of glorious enjoyments, that apprehend God in his discoveries of himself, cannot but be lost in the thoughts of th. m; then are your souls in a spiritual frame when they work in the sight of God in Christ, and futable to the openings of his heart; the more your hearts are full of these apprehensions, the more you will breake forth in admirations.

But now to the words themselves, and in them first of the Preface; *without Controversie, &c.*

The Apostile speaks as one so confident that all did grant it to be truth, that there need no farther debate but the laying down the very things themselves.

The word (ὁμολογμένως) signifies an absolute and cleare confession of a thing without doubt or scruple, and it is as much as if the Apostile had said by the confession of all, it is so; it is a confessed truth by all the Saints, not one disputing or denying it, that godliness is a great mystery; in all these particulars I need give you no confirmation at all of it, it is without question, to deny it is to be wilfully blind and desperate.

Obs.

Obs. That there are principles and mysteries of godliness clear and undeniable to all the Saints.

He doth not say, I confess it is so, and all that I have conversed with all, but all that have had any light of the spirit confess this to be true; it is a thing generally received without any controversie at all: In the opening this I shall shew.

1. That there are principles of godliness as of other things.

2. That they are confessed by the Saints.

For the first: As there are principles in every Art or Science, which are as the foundations of other things, so likewise in divinity; such as the Apostle, *Heb. 6. 1.* calls (θεμέλιον) the foundation, and *Heb. 5. 12.* (στοιχεῖα) the first principles, and now calls (μυστήριον) the mystery: and to prove.

1. Because divinity or godliness is the most demonstrative and certain knowledg of things that can be, now principles are the foundation of all demonstration; if there were not principles, there could be no certainty of knowledge. No man could speak any thing, no man could beleieve any thing, if there were not common and generall foundations or principles to build upon; therefore this must be granted, that God hath left something in Religion which is without dispute.

2. If

2. If there were not set and absolute principles, there could be no common faith, or common experience among the Saints, none could know the condition of one another, or be able to judge of one another, neither of things themselves. Now the Apostle speaks of a common faith; and in another place there is but one faith, one baptism, one hope among all the Saints, *2 Pct. 1. 2.* That other Foundation no man can lay then what is laid, which is Jesus Christ, *1 Cor. 3. 11.* in *Gal. 1.* no preaching of another Gospel, no, though by an Angel from heaven. But I need prove that no farther.

2. These principles are confessed by all the Saints, this is that the Apostle aims at, that none of the Saints scrupled this. That Godliness was a great mystery in every one of the particulars mentioned. Consider,

1. That which belongs to a Saint as a Saint, to his very being, he cannot be ignorant of, as that Jesus Christ died, and by his merits we are pardoned, that from him is all life, that God was manifested in him, and accepts us by him; that we come to him by faith, and enjoy him by our union; these things go to the constitution of a Saint, faith towards our Lord Jesus, and repentance towards God; he is not a Saint which knows not this, for they are
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the principles of his being; indeed the largeness and extent of these principles: The priviledges of his being he may be ignorant of, for they are successively manifested, as the glory of his union, and the fulness of grace, and the rich assurance of it to his own soul, these he may be doubtful in; but to question this, whether Christ be the Son of God, hath died, and is risen again, these he cannot be ignorant of, for his faith is vain if these things be not true, and granted by him; he is no Saint if Christ be no Saviour; but for the manner of making out this, of what full efficacy Christs Death and Resurrection is, and the like, and the manner of applying this, he may be exceeding dark in.

2. The principles of godliness are laid down so positive and so plain, that the light that every Saint receives makes him believe them; these things are exprest in absolute terms, that Christ is the only Saviour, and nothing to be joyned with him; that justification is freely by grace; that in *Adam* all have sinned; that all which are in Christ are new Creatures, with such like expressions, so that the first and most common light of faith assents to them: there be some things in the World, in which there lies a great deal of beauty and glory, not so nakedly exprest, nor so obvious to every

every understanding, as of the time of justification, the manner of our union, many things of the Kingdom of Christ, and other things which may admit a controversie, they being not so clear in themselves.

3. Principles that are absolutely fundamentall, God hath set them down as the objects of faith to be beleevd on, not disputed. And though we cannot see the reason of them yet we are to beleve them; their demonstration lies in Gods testimony of them. Gods word or things is a Christians reason.

Use. Oh that in this sceptick age we would but observe this rule, to hold to principles: men are grown to question every thing, fundamentals cannot scape; some mens questions, most mens criticks are above their judgments: Some think Religion lies in a questioning all things. That good notion of searching after truth deceives many by misapprehension; the way to lose truth is to question the principles on which they are built; the Apostle speaks unto *Timothy* (μὴ λογομαχεῖν) not to strive about words which tend to no profit, 2 *Tim.* 2. 14. and to hold fast the form of wholesome words or doctrines (ὑποτύπωσιν) 2 *Tim.* 1. 13. an express systeme of principles. In all Sciences something must be taken for granted; Philosophers have made

a just Law, *Contra principia non est disputandum*; they hiss at men that shall deny principles received by all Schollars, grounded on the absolute Law of Reason; for there must be some granted rules and principles that men dispute by, else it will be but a babble, no dispute; all argumentation is concerning the application of rules, and deductions from principles: So it is in divinity, there be some truths are as foundation stones, must not be touched lest the whole building fall with it. A blame not Saints for searching after truth, but condemn that stint of mens spirits to look after no more then they have known; great and noble spirits love to be reaching after perfection, there is much to be discovered of the mystery of the Gospel, of the glory and beauty of truth. But this I urge, that there are some things must be without controversie, some truths that are written as with a Sun beame, confest and acknowledged by all, that must be beleaved, not argued.

There is a twofold questioning of things.

1. Doubting whether they be so or no, that is dangerous, because men shall never want their scruples, if they will dispute those things which are supernatural; what God hath by his own testimony in the Word, and in the hearts of all the Saints put out of question,

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It is *Crimen læsæ Majestatis* but to name in doubting.

2. Men question things to be more cleared and confirmed in them, not so much for satisfaction of the truth of them, as desire to see the farther beauty and excellency of them; this is commendable, for Saints to study all the principles wherein God hath manifested himself, that he may have his heart more set upon them. So the *Bereans* they were noble, they would enquire into the Doctrine that *Paul* preached, and *Paul* commended them for it, and saith, they were (ἐυερέεσσι) men of better breeding; whatever comes from men you may question, and search again whether it be so or no; but what you find in the Word laid down in expresse terms you may not question, but beleeve; though yet you may labour to be more clear, and to have the same thing more demonstrative, and more spiritual to you; the Apostle unto *Timothy*, that the things he had heard of him among many witnesses he should (παρεδώκεν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις) commit unto faithful men, who may teach the same to others, 2 *Tim.* 2. 2. the Apostle would have the same Doctrine to go from hand to hand, and be transferred unto others; for new principles to be revealed I expect not, but those in a new way, more of truth

truth in a new kind of glory, more full and enriching ; the light that the Saints have received is the same for kind and nature, but not for degree ; therefore the Apostle saith, If we or an Angel from heaven shall preach another Gospel, that is different from what is preached in the revelation of Christ, let him be accursed, *Gal. 1. 8, 9.* It is one thing to preach another Gospel, and another thing to have that same Gospel opened more gloriously, and to have the sparklings of it more strong and glorious. He that will know no more than he hath known, is proud, and knows nothing ; and he that will know any thing contrary, or more than these principles of godliness contains, and will by improvement come up to, will be as one in the dark that knows not where he goes ; to stick on the bare principles and go no farther, is as a child that learns his Catechisme, and thinks he needs no more learning ; and to seek to know much with casting off principles, is as one that would learn the Hebrew or Greek, and yet will cast aside the Characters and Rules. That soul can never miscarry in divine knowledge, that holding the foundation builds according to that. Let your structure be as high and glorious as can be, so your foundation be sure ; for a man to make a long and mysterious discourse, and
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accent every expression, with the best language, and yet neither he, nor any that heares, can tell either what he aimes at, or to what head or principle naturall to reduce it, how ridiculous is he in all wise mens eyes; all the fine and curious webs of speculation which men spin, and these stately structures in their own fancies will all be cut in sunder, and fall down, if they be not founded on the first, same, and eternal principles of godlinesse. God hath saved all the Saints by one and the same, way, Christ, and faith; And though these things are more gloriously exprest now than before, and the same heart more opened in the same Christ, and faith acted with greater strength and cleareness than formerly; yet the same love, and faith, and Christ continues still. It is a pitiful thing to see souls stick still on the bare principles, and not launch out into that deep mystery which is contained in them; and as sad it is to see men leave these principles and hug their own fancies. Oh Beloved, that unity in the spirit lies much in the onenesse and union of the foundation. This one Principle, that God was manifest in flesh, and this Christ made a Mediatour of souls, what an eternall ground of comfort doth it afford, thou needest not goe seek a new manifestation of this God; the studying but of
this

this one, may take up all thy thoughts every minute and moment of thy life, and entertain thee with fresh and new wonders of Glory. Every one of these Principles are a mystery, and mysteries, though about the same things, are opened but by degrees. Angels desire to let out their thoughts in the reviewing of these unsearchable riches. There is not a line or expression of Christ in the Scripture, but is matter enough for a whole Age to Comment upon; so that thou needest not leave old principles for new discoveries; for in them thou mayest find successive sweetnesse.

The Apostle in the 2 *Collossians* v. 2. speaks of a full assurance of understanding, which the Saints may come unto, τῆς πληροφειας τῆς συνέσεως. That is the same with what the Text saith. To be so fully assured in our understandings, of all the truths of the Gospel, that nothing can shake us. To have all things so demonstrative and clear, and our judgments so convinced and settled in them, that we may see round about all the objections that can be made of them: Doubting in judgment, makes doubting in Conscience and faith. As your principles are, so your practise will be; therefore you had need have them cleare. The holding of some things are so odious, that a Saint should not answer them

them, but contemn them. So *Paul*, when this objection came in, that we might sin because grace abounds. *Rom. 6. 1.* What, doth he stand to confute it? no, he will not honour it with an answer, but abominates the thoughts of it; God forbid, saith he.

To conclude this with a ground of comfort to all Saints. Your salvation is without controversie; the grounds of your eternal peace, are not to be so much as questioned. All things are carried on in a mystery; yet so sure, as that it is death to question them: You may as well doubt, whether there be a God, as doubt whether the everlasting foundation of your peace can be removed: There is nothing for you to do in this, but to believe; as these things in themselves are past dispute, so do you believe that they be without doubt to you. Get your assurances as unquestionable as Gods foundation; for that stands sure, and hath an eternal seal unto it; put your propriety in this mystery out of dispute, that you may be able to say without all controversie, this mystery is in me; and as God was manifest in flesh, and I may not doubt it, so God is manifest in me, and I dare not deny it. Art thou in *Jesus Christ*, who is the summe of this great mystery? why then; let Devils and Men question thy salvation, it cannot hinder thy comfort. Beloved,

Beloved, get things at ſuch a paſs in your ſouls, that all things are beyond diſpute in your hearts, either concerning the principles, or the application of them to your conſcience, that you may come to the full aſſurance of Underſtanding in the mysteries of the Goſpel, not to doubt of the truth of them, ſo come to the full aſſurance of Faith, not to queſtion your part in them. That as this is ſure, that Chriſt is, ſo you may be as ſure, that you are in Chriſt.

God hath not left the things of ſalvation, the great truths of his Goſpel, to be judged by the pur-blind eye of a probable judgment, but by the clear and open eye of Faith. And though they ſeem to lie never ſo contrary to the received principles of reaſon; yet if they have Gods ſtamp, they muſt be believed by our Faith.

If we may but gueſſe and conjecture at things of the Goſpel, what a miſerable condition were we in? what a diſparagement to the divine light of Truth, that it is not ſo demonſtrative, and fit for knowledge, as the maxims of Nature? Indeed as the Apoſtle ſaith, *1 Cor. 2.8.* The natural man with all his accompliſht parts and light of reaſon, cannot perceive the things of God; the utmoſt of his knowledge is but conjectural and common; he ſees not into the

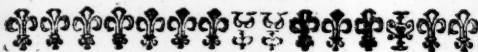
the nature of these truths. But the poorest soul which hath the least beame of supernatural light in his understanding, beholds such infallible cleernesse in the mind of God, that his whole soul falls down before the manifestation of it.

Ob. But can a soul be as much without controversie and doubt of his own salvation, and his being wrapt up in that Mystery, as he is of the truth of the things themselves?

Sol. I answer. Yes; the same that reveals the one, reveals the other, the same un-erring spirit that revealed the mystery in it self, reveals it to the soul, and the same closeth with the light of the one, as with the other; why may not a soul be assured, that what the Holy Ghost hath written in his heart, is as certain, as what he hath writ in the word? Doubtlesse, the work of the Spirit in the fleshly tables of our hearts, is as certain; and I may have a sure knowledge of it, as of the writing in Tables of stone, or in paper; for the Mystery of God in the heart, is but a transcript of what is in the word: yea, doubtless it is more glorious then the bare expression of the mystery in words. What makes the soul be fully perswaded, that this in the Bible is the word of God, that these truths are certain? but because of that light and demonstration

stration of the spirit, which accompanies it, everyone sees not that infallible glory and beauty in these things, only takes them up in a general and customary notion; but in the Saints they know it is so, as they know that snow is white, and the same light and power of the spirit, assures their souls, that what is written in their hearts, is as absolute an undeniable truth. The inequality of light from the spirit, causeth the inequality of knowledge and assurance, concerning them both. And the Apostle speaks as confidently of his own salvation, as he speaks of the Truth of the Gospel; we know that if this earthly house, &c. 2 Cor. 5. 1. And we know we are of God, though all the world lyes in wickednesse: And there is a full assurance of Faith, as of understanding. Oh look therefore to come into an unquestionable condition; once thou hast it demonstrative that thou art in Christ; take heed of questioning it. As every word which God hath spoken, shall not passe away unfulfilled; so every work which God hath wrought in thee, shall be perfected, God giving the same assurance to thy spirit, as he doth to his own Truth.

SERMON



SERM. II.

1 Tim. 3. 16.

*And without controversie great is the Mystery
of Godlinesse, &c.*

IN these words, there is a full and summary comprehension of the deepest divine truths that ever came out of Gods heart, and a seal of confirmation added to the assurance of them; they are not things which hang on uncertain grounds, but have such demonstrations within themselves, that they are *without all controversie*; confest absolutely by all Saints; not but that some do deny them, but that in themselves they are to be believed by the Saints. There is no place in all the Scripture, that in one verse, doth Epitomize all Divinity, as this; that I may call it a Map of both worlds, wherein at once you may behold all that, which would cost you all your life to travel over, and see in the fulnesse of its Clory. All

All Divinity may be reduced to two heads: Gods manifestation in Christ, and Christs manifestation in us; God in Him, and He in us; and both these are laid out to the full in the Text.

We may well admire the fulness, and shortness of Divine expression in the Scripture, that so much should be wrapt up in so little; more then to have *Homers Iliads* compriz'd in a nut-shell. Turn over all the Volumes of Nature, all the large writings of Prophane or Divine Authors, they contain not so much matter as one of these expressions will hold forth unto us.

That which I shall begin with, is the general description of Divinity, which is laid down in these words;

Great is the Mystery of Godlinesse.

Εὐσέβεια.

Wherein you have, first, the thing described, that is, *Godlinesse*; or else you have,

The subject, *Godlinesse*.

The predicate, *Mystery*.

The adjunct, a *Great Mystery*.

2. The description it self, it is a *Mystery*.

3. The adjunct, our Title to express by, it is a *Great Mystery*.

The Apostle cannot contain himself in

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ordinary

ordinary expressions ; to say it was a mystery is an exceeding large expression beyond our apprehensions ; but in that he calls it a great mystery, he raiseth our thoughts, and looseth our understanding.

This observe by the way, you can never speak too high of, nor admire too much any thing of the Gospel ; when you have spoken to the utmost, and have lost your self and your hearers, yet then you are below what glory is contained in them ; you may speak too much of any creature, and presently transgress in your commendations, but it is impossible that ever any expressions should reach Gospel-mysterie ; *Hyperbotes* in the world are the excretion of our frothy wits, and serve but only to indulge our corrupt affections ; but as one saith, *Deus & Cælum non patitur hyperbolen*, all the height of expressions and wit strained through the narrowest and purest fancy can never be too high in expressing Gospel-glory. Gods own spirit is as it were streightned, and at a losse for expressions to set forth the deep mysteries of the Gospel ; and though what is spoken of them be proper, yet they are far under the things themselves, and no more than Pictures and Phantasmes to the reality of those things themselves. What words can be given to set forth invifible and immortal,

immortal, and immense glory. God hath help'd our senses and understandings by those expressions, though in all that is written he hath spoken below himself; if a man should paint the glory of the Sun, what colours could he use, or how would he limbo out the nature of a soul? why spiritual mysteries are far more invisible and glorious.

1. I shall begin in the first place with the subject of the proposition, that is Godliness.

2. Shew that it is mystery.

3. That it is a Great mystery.

That every word as well single as compounded may have its weight.

For the first, the word (*εὐσεβεία*), signifies the right worshipping of God in the general signification of it; and it is used by the heathens to express the worship of their Gods: But in that notion it is not meant here, besides what was said the last time of the nature of Godliness, in regard of the communion of the two expressions, truth and godliness, I shall proceed more particularly to express the nature of it.

It is used three waies in Scripture.

1. For the whole doctrine of the Gospel, as a general word which contains whatever is demonstrated concerning God; so it is called the doctrine which is according to god-

liness, 1 *Tim.* 6. 3. thus godliness is truth.

2. It is put for the inward work of all these truths on the heart, for the gracious qualifications of a soul futable to the truths of the Gospel; they are put both together by the Apostle, *Tit.* 1. 1, 2. the acknowledgment of the truth which is after godliness, it imports the inward frame of the soul in conformity to the truths which are godliness.

3. It is put for the holy walkings of a Saint in the world from the pattern of these spiritual truths, 1 *Tim.* 4. 7. exercise thy self in godliness, that is, in all the wayes of holiness; by godliness here is meant the whole sum of divinity, the circumference of all Religion, especially that which contains the great contrivance of Gods wisdom and love in the Gospel, and the manifestation and working of it in us; It is not meant barely of the truths themselves, but of the works of these truths in the Saints.

So that godliness consists in the light of truth, and in the life of grace; God manifesting himself in the light of truth, and working in the life of love and grace in the heart.

There is a form of godliness which the Apostle speaks of, 2 *Tim.* 3. 5. a meer external profession and garb of godliness, there is no mystery in that, men may take up a

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curious picture of holiness without much ado, nature can reach that mystery; but there is a power of godlinesse which consists in the life and spirit of truth in the soul, that is a mystery.

Will you know then what godliness is? It is the openings of Gods glory in it self, and the workings of it gloriously in the soul. Godlinesse lies not in the bare expression of words, nor in the external form of profession of these words: But it lies in the divine glory of God which is wrapt up in these words, and the gracious dispositions and affections of the soul to these things; What a great matter is it for a man to confesse Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, to pray and expresse outward words accordingly: But to see the mystery of that glory which is in this that Christ is Gods Son, and to have the powerful influence of it in the soul, this is godlinesse, and that which is called a great mystery.

Thus then the whole manifestation of God in the Gospel, all the actings of his glory in truth, and all those truths wrought in the soul, is this godlinesse which the Apostle well calls a great mystery; though this must be added, that the Apostle especially aims here at the truths themselves, and Gods manifestation of his glory in them.

Now secondly, This he calls a mystery ; It is a high expreffion , and worthy to be appropriated unto godlineſſe ; and the Holy Ghoſt ever makes uſe of it when he would ſet forth the unexprefſible nature of Goeple-truth ; therefore to open it :

1. It ſignifies ſome ſecret and hidden thing that is above vulgar apprehenſion ; its a word that comes from (*μύω*) which ſignifies to ſhut up, and hide a thing that none may find it and know where it is, as men hide jewels and precious things from common hands ; therefore *Daniel* ſaith, It is God in heaven that reveals myſteries or ſecret things, *Dan.* 2. 28. Thus godlineſſe is a myſtery hidden from the eyes of thouſands, hidden in Gods own breaſt from everlaſting, and as the Apoſtle expreſſeth in *Eph* 3. *hidden from generations of men.* The Goeple is Gods ſecret, that which is his boſome counſel. Angels nor men could not have known it, if God had not revealed it ; ſo that it is a myſtery which without revelation is unknown, that which cannot be demonſtrated or argued out, but its nature conſiſts in revelation. Among the heathen they had their myſteries in their temples which they muſt not diſcover ; therefore there was an Image before the Temple with his finger before his mouth, ſhewing that they muſt be ſilent in diſcovering hidden

hidden mysteries. Though the Gospel be now revealed, yet it is a mystery, because once it was kept so secret.

2. And which follows from thence, that is a mystery which hath any thing in its own nature which is not obvious, and which lies not open to the quick and present apprehensions of men; as some things in nature are said to be mysteries, and in government there are *arcana imperii*, hidden things of state that the vulgar cannot pry into; secret wheels that move many actions which they cannot see move, only do behold the outward action; the things of the Gospel are *arcana Dei*; though we see the things done, yet we see not these invisible glorious wheels which did act them; and thus though the thing it self be revealed, yet because the reasons of them lye under ground they are called mysteries; thus the conversion of the Gentiles, and the calling of the Jews are both called mysteries, *Rom. 11.* thus divine truths are mysteries; thou hearest of Christ, and hast manifestations of God to thee, but alas the infinite reason God hath acted from, the secret wheels that have run along in every vein of Gods love, that is unknown; who hath searched his counsels, saith the Apostle? All Gods actions to us they have come from infinite and unsearchable

counfels; go into a Chymists shop, there thou findest several extractions of mettals which thou seest, and tastest, but how he did it thou know'st not; that is a mystery to thee, what art he used in so rare a thing which to thy eye seems contrary and impossible; godlinesse hath been acted in such an invisible way that it may well be called a mysterie: How hath the Load-stone pulled all the heads of the greatest ones in the world, that they have left it is as mysterie, a thing only to be believed, but the reason not known, only have reduced its power under a general notion of Sympathy, and all, because men knew not the occult reasons of its nature. That God should carry himself in such a hidden way of glory that none can find out his steps but only by the effects of it, and that we can only say it is so, but not how, or why it is so, is the mystery of godliness.

3. That is a *mystery*, whose inward nature & excellency cannot be express'd, but is wrapt up in outward figures and representations, that which is so glorious in its own Nature, as it cannot be seen or manifested to us, but by the intervention of some external medium. Thus marriage is said to be a great mysterie because it is set to convey the hidden and mystical Marriage between Christ and the Church.

Ephes.

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Ephes. 5. One would have thought all along that Chapter; he spoke in a literal sense of marriage, but at last he sums up all; this a *great mystery*: But I speak concerning Christ and the Church. Thus all the Gospel in general, and in particular, is full of *mysteries*; Its own Nature is veiled in words and outward Types; Gods relations to us & Christs, under the notions of Husband and Wife, Father and Children; God compared to light; Christ set out by a Lion, a Lamb, a Shepherd: Grace express'd by gold and silver, and precious stones: Heaven by Paradise. All which things do rather veil, then expresse these hidden glories in them, and all these titles which are contain'd the nature and things far above them. And under all these is covered the reality that God is to the soul. As *Hieroglyphicks* do denote something that is internal; so do all the expressions of Scripture, and all the manifestations of God, but represent some hidden glory that at first we cannot perceive. Therefore Christ delivers the Gospel in Parables, and tells his Disciples; *Unto you it is given to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom.* God makes many shapés and appearances of these inward beauties, that we may come to learn what they mean, by these sensible things. As some stately pictures are covered over with a

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Curtain, that every one that comes into the room, cannot see them : So is it with the things of Heaven ; they are represented in grosse bodies, which is as a Curtain before them, and until that be drawn , none can behold them. The Sacraments , they are outward signs of an invisible glory ; in Water, and Bread, and Wine, are represented and veiled, Christ in his person, and merits, in all his holinesse to the soul ; he that comes and touches these things, and tastes them, may see but little in them, more then in ordinary bread, but only God discovers a mystery under these signes, unto a Saints Faith, makes the soul see Christ in his Nature and merits, and feel him in his Vertue. So in his preaching, the high and unexpressible love of God is to be let forth in the words of a Minister ; which words can never expresse what that love is.

And souls may hear a thousand of the most Gospel-Sermons that can be preach'd , and yet understand nothing of Divine Truth, only there is a *mystery* veiled in these words ; *and the great and inward things of God are manifested thorough these words* : And this is one great respect wherein the godliness is call'd a *mystery*, because its own Nature is not to be exprest, though it be represented by outward things.

4. It is a *mystery*, because, of the fulnesse, and vastnesse, and variety of its manifestations; it is so full, as that it cannot be discovered at once; it is so vast, as that it cannot be lookt into but by degrees; the variety of its actings are so many, as that you have it open'd in several parcels. As some locks that you have seen, have so many several wards and turnings in them, that though they be in one piece, yet you must have divers keys, and divers turnings to open it; as several artificial Boxes, folded in one another; so is the *mystery* of the Gospel, though one intire piece of Heavenly light, yet interwoven with such varietie of turnings, and spreading it self abroad into so vast a circumference, that you cannot see but a little of its glory, as you can see no more of the Sun, then in your own Horizon. So saith the Apostle, *Rom. 1. The Righteousness of God, is revealed from Faith to Faith.* And in the *Revelations; The Book of the Lamb had seven Seals.*

Take godliness in it self, and the whole bulk of it, and it is so large, as it reacheth from everlasting to everlasting; and all along it is manifested in a multitude of new expressions and demonstrations.

Take it in all the particulars of it, and every one is a distinct *mystery*, and so large, that there

there is not any one part of it fully discovered, or to be compleatly known; every other knowledge may be soon attained unto, men have come to a great perfection in it; but all our life is but a learning of this art, none profess to be Masters of it, all are Scholars, and the more they learn, they wonder the more at their own ignorance, there is so much behind. It is delivered in short sentences, that all the wits in the world have been racking their heads: but to beat out knowledge of it. All the former ages have had work enough for all their parts too, and to serve but their age, out of the very letters in which this *mystery* is written; and yet the after ages wonder that they have known no more, and could dig no more glorie out of this one Myne. The very out-side, and Characters of the Gospel, have tortur'd the strongest heads from age to age, but to understand the meaning of it. And how much do Saints find in the Gospel, in this age, as if there were a new manifestation of God unto the world: Yea, and the ages to come shall know more of this *mystery* then we have.

The Apostle, *Ephes. 2. 7.* Hath an expression in the *Ephesians*, which is observable, *viz.* That in the Ages to come he might shew forth the exceeding riches of his grace, υπερ-
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ἐάλλοντα πλῆστον τῆς χάριτος. The superabundant riches of grace, that is but one part of this *mystery*, yet it is an extream excess; Why had not God revealed grace enough in the former ages; and in that present age, in calling in the *Gentiles*, in converting so many thousands at once; what a deal of that grace had *Paul* himself. 1 *Tim.* 1. 14. He saith, that grace did superabound to him, before he writ to the *Ephesians*, and is there any more grace to be revealed? Oh, yes; herein lies the *mystery* of grace, that he hath reserved exceeding riches of grace, for the ages to come, grace that never saw light before, as if he had yet a fuller magazine of riches of grace for the latter ages, and unto this day, we see grace running over all bounds on the *Creatures*. And we may say the like of every part of godlineſſe; It is such a vast body of light and glory, that it can be seen by no eye in the world at once. God hath laid out every part in a distinct excellency: As when you go to buy curious things at the *Exchange*, there are so many varieties, that you must have one box opened, then another, and by degrees see all their commodities: Therefore you have it said of the manifestations of God in the old Testament. 1. *Heb.* 1. πολυμέλως πολύτρωπος. God manifested in his glory, by piecemeal,

meal, and in divers ways and administrations, because of the abundance of glory in it; so not in the new Testament, these truths are set forth in divers administrations, divers operations, and multitude of gifts; some have one gift, some another, and yet all but opening one and the same *mystery*, in various and severall ways; the whole variety of dispensations is called by the Apostle *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* 4. 10. The manifold wisdom of God, or the wisdom of God variously manifested, one and the same wisdom acted in several glories (*ποικίλως*.) And thus godliness is a *mystery* indeed, which hath such manifold wisdom in it, so highly, and diversly, and successively acted.

Fifthly, A mystery is put to express the depth of knowledge, the profoundness of any Science; it is knowledge unknown as it were unto the most, that which few know, or can dive into. It is not the scum or froth of wit, but the height and depth of wisdom; to be known in mysteries is to be a man of learning and knowledge, as we say: Thus is godliness a mystery, that it hath the bottom and depth of all counsel and wisdom in it; in the contrivance of godliness God acted his utmost and eternal wisdom, and there you have the bottom of his heart turned up; these

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these things that lay deep in the boundlesse sea of eternity are brought in sight unto our eyes ; the Apostles expression of it is this, he brought life and immortality to light, through the Gospel. As if some man of rare parts should bring to knowledge some secret and strange contrived plot of great consequence into a state ; why by the Gospel which is the systeme of godliness, light, and immortality, the greatest things of most infinite concernment are brought to light ; you read in the *Corinthians* of the deep things of God which the Spirit reveals, *1 Cor. 2.* (τὰ βᾶθῃ τῶ θεοῦ) these deep things are nothing else but this mystery of godliness, which come out of the depth of wisdom, and power, and love unto our souls.

In *Rom. 11.* the Apostle speaking but of one part, of this mystery in the rejection of the Jews, cries out in admiration, (Ο βᾶθος) Oh the depth both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, &c. godliness is no shallow thing, an outside of knowledge ; but the very depth of wisdom and knowledge, the word signifies a gulph that hath no bottom at all.

There is not a part of godliness but you must go back unto eternity to find its beginning, it contains the weightiest and important things of immortality and glory ; the Elephant may swim in these streams, the
soul

soul may soon be drowned in wading into these waters, lose his feet, and have the billows of immortality and unfearchable wisdom overflow him; godlinesse contains things which reason cannot reach, which wit cannot expresse, which the vastest understanding cannot contain. Sense is swallowed up, reason is non-plust while it deals with those mysteries; the Apostle professeth that they are so deep that none but the blessed spirit, who knows all things, can reveal them; yea, and he saith, *that he searcheth the deep things*, &c. As if they were so deep that the Spirit it self must search into them before he can know them; not but the Spirit knows all things, but to expresse unto us what mysterious things are in godlinesse.

Babylon in the *Revelations* is called a mystery, because of the depth of deceit and policy whereby she stands, *Rev. 10. 7.* In a word, whatever is dark in it self, or delivered in hidden and unusual terms, that is called a mystery, whatever cannot be known but meerly by Revelation, *Rom. 16. 25.* Thus is the Gospel, and all Religion purely to be discovered by the revelation of the spirit of God; thus much of what the Word in its use imports: I must apply this ere I go farther.

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us, why no more are acquainted with the Gospel, it is a mystery; the most of men are ignorant of the ordinary, and the common principles of nature: there are but a few of strong apprehensions that can fathom them, but the things of Religion are mysteries far above the reach of nature; no marvel if the wise men, and the noble men of the world are so foolish in these things; for the Apostle gives the reason, *We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery*, 1 Cor. 2. 7. the wisdom of God is made known in the Gospel; and in a mystery; what is that; why it is veiled inward, and poor, and low expressions, which all their parts cannot see into.

The Apostle professeth, that no natural man can reach the meaning of them, 1 Cor. 2. 14. All the things of Christ they are paradoxes, strange things to men of great judgments in the world; and the reason is, because they are spiritually to be discerned: (πνευματικὰς ἀναεῖναι) this is a great objection against many things of truth, such great men and wise men can see no reason for it; it is no wonder, for they are mysteries: Those which will find out this riddle must plow with another Heifer than sense and reason, and natural endowments. God hath so ordered that he hath chosen the foolish things of the world,

(καταρχήν)

καταχύνῃ) to confound the wise things of the world. 1 Cor. 1. 27.

Therefore the Gospel is called the wisdom of God, as opposite to the wisdom of men; And the Apostle saith positively, that it was wisdom in such a mystery that none of the Princes of this world knew; Nay, the Spirit jeers all the learned of the world in this very thing, because of their grosse ignorance, (πῶς σοφοί? πῶς γεγραμμένους? *Where is the Scribe? Where is the wise? Where is the disputer? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?* 1 Cor. 1. 20. (πῶς συζητᾶτες) Christ he blesteth his Father for this, that he had hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes, *Mat. 11.*

There is a twofold knowledge of Religion: A historical, or notional, and spiritual, and mystical; the first, these which are most wise may come unto the most exact knowledge of, as far as letters and words will expresse things, as much as outward Characters can expresse inward life; and they may know the true sence and meaning of things in the Gospel, according to what either the history, or the tenor of such words will import, and have as real meaning of the words as the best of Saints may have: But this is (*hære in cortice*) to stick at the rind, they can never spiritually see into that glorious

glorious mystery which God intends by these expressions.

But this I would have all to note, though the mystery is more than can be express'd in word, and there is a further glory hidden than is express'd in any sentences divine, yet there is no mystery contrary to the very sense and meaning of the positive words of Scripture.

Obj. So that if any ask how far the light of humane reason can go in the finding out these great mysteries.

Sol. I answer, No further than what the sense of words will bear, and the deductions, and conclusions from thence, (which yet may be as true for the notion as any knowledge which enlighten'd souls have) but into the intimate glory and nature of the thing themselves, and Gods design of love and glory in them, all the light of nature cannot see, for they are spiritual things, though cloathed with earthly forms, and expressing themselves by earthly mediums, and they are to be judged in their own nature, and their own light. (Πνευματικοῖς πνεύματα συνηκρόοντες) judging spiritual things by spiritual, as the Sun must be tried by its own light, not, by the Stars or a candle; for example, suppose a mans soul be affected with joy or grief, or taken up with apprehensions of some high nature, and it breaks

breaks forth in words or writing to expresse this, any man which hath reason can tell what the words mean, and so gives judgment of his workings: But to see intimately how that soul works, how the spirits flow up and down in the workings of the soul on those apprehensions, none can imagine but one that is possesst with the very same passion, and can go as it were purely into such a soul; so may I say of all the mystery of the Gospel, the sound of words, the sense of things which they hold forth, nature may see, reason may apprehend: But to behold the spiritual glory and beauty of God in these above all things else, none but the spiritual man, one who hath his heart in the bosom of those glories, can see. Therefore the Apostle prays for the *Ephesians*, *Ephes. 1. 17, 18.* That they might have the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him, the eyes of their understanding being enlightned, they might know, &c.

Use 2. What cause hast thou to bless God for ever, who hast any thing of this *mystery* made known to thee? It was hid from ages and generations of men, and hath God revealed it in any measure to thy poor soul: Oh what a deal of wonder should it raise in thy heart. It is as a great *mystery*, to reveal this in thee, as the things themselves do hold forth.

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forth, The Apostle to the *Colossians*, magnifies the dispensation of it, 1 *Col.* 26, 27. And he calls it the riches of the glory of the *mystery*, which is, Christ in you. This *mystery* holds forth the unsearchable riches of Christ to the poor soul: Oh, men do not know what a mercy it is, to have a revelation of this glorious Christ, in such a *mystery*, in their own souls; that must needs be a glorious mercy, which Christ doth so heartily thank his Father for, *Mat.* 11.

There is not such an expression in all the Scripture again, where Christ doth so expressly thank his Father, as for the revelation of these great things to poor souls.

God might have shut up thee in blindnesse with the world, given thee only parts and gifts in the world, heightened thy understanding, to have contemplated the secrets of Nature, and it had born a great mercy, or at most might have enlightned thy reason, to have taken in the outward notion of the Gospel: But hath he revealed Christ in thee, let thee see into the wonders of glory, which no tongue can expresse, and given thee the light of his Glory in thy heart? Oh, how should thy soul be ravished with the riches of God's love to thee?

3. Use. If Religion be a *mystery*, how should

should we wait on God for the manifestation of every truth of it : when we come to hear the Gospel, we should come as to mysteries, lay down our own carnal reason and unbelief, and look for God to teach us, and to reveal his own glory in us.

There is a two-fold vail must be taken away, the one from our eyes, and the other from the things themselves.

1. God must open divine truths to us in their own Nature ; there is a vail that lies on them, viz. the darknesse of the expression of them ; nay, the resplendentnes and exceeding glory of truth in its self, is as a vail before it, as the glory of the Sun is as a vail unto it, that we cannot look stedfastly on it to behold its Nature. Now, God must remove all vails from godliness, and make its glory taking unto us, and not only so : But

2. The vail must be taken off from our eyes ; though these things were never so light-some, yet if we are blind, it is all one to us : light and darkness is at one with a blind-man. The Apostle saith of the Jewes, that when Moses was read, there was a vail on his face ; they could not see thorough these outward shadows, the living substance, Jesus Christ ; but the reason was, because the vail was on their hearts. But when the vail is taken off,

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then we behold with open face, the glory of God, as in a glasse. 2 Cor. 3. ult.

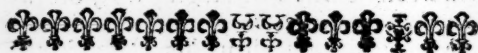
Men strive to excell in knowledge in the world, to dive into things that are not common, which others understand not. Oh Brethren, here is knowledge indeed, to comprehend this *mystery* of godliness.

1. In the knowing this a man comes to be privy to all God's eternal plots and designs of love and grace unto the world.

2. Souls which behold this *mystery*, they see their own persons, and happiness wrapped up in it; for it is a *mystery* for us, and in us.

3. In knowing this, a soul is able to reconcile all contradictions, both in himself and the world, for they all have their reason here, which in Nature are absurdities.

4. There is no way to take thy heart, or work on thy soul by any truth; but as thou seeest in the hidden and mysterious excellency of it; all outward apprehensions of divine things will go no farther then the outward man.



SERM. III.

1 Tim. 3. 16.

God manifested in the Flesh, &c.

I Am now come to these particulars, wherein the Apostle layes down the greatnesse of the *Mystery of godlinesse*; he might well elevate his voice, and accent his words when he was to speak of such deep things; to call it a *great mystery*. Godliness in general is a *mystery*, and every thing contained in it, grace and the actings of so many mysteries. But here indeed lies the *greatnesse of the mystery*, that is passing all knowledge, that God is manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit.

So that the Apostle summes up all the *mystery* of godliness in these six particulars.

Before I come to handle each distinctly, know in general, that all that is spoken of here

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in this mysterious enumeration of particulars, it is spoken of, in reference to Jesus Christ, he is the summe and subject of it. For *God manifested in the flesh*, was no other then Christ, *who was also justified in the spirit, and who is Preached unto the Gentiles, and who is believed on in the World, &c.* They all are so many several openings of Christ according to the several ways he may be apprehended.

Christ is the *mystery* wrapt up in all the mysteries of the Gospel; he comprehends all the circumference of godliness; he is the scope of all the Scriptures, the Pearl hid in the large Field of Gods word. Every line is drawn to him, as the centre, all things and persons in the old world were types of him, all the Prophets prophesied of him, all the New Testament speaks of him, all the Saints are joyn'd to him, all Gods love runs through him, all graces and gifts flow from him, the whole eye of God is upon him, his great designs in Heaven and Earth meet in him; as man is an Epitome of the whole world, so is Christ of all religion. *Eph. 1. 10.* There is an ἀνακεφάλευσις, a summing up of all things in Heaven and Earth, in Jesus Christ. If you look on the Creation, the world was made by Christ, *Col. 1. 15, 16, 17.* on evidences, all things subsist in Christ, have their being and well being in
D him;

him: If you eye what is the end of all things, why it is Christ; all things made for him: Look again how all things are redeemed, why, God was in Christ, reconciling the world, *2 Cor. 6.* Will you know where to find God? why, he was in Christ. Will you know what is Heaven? it is to be with Christ; *Phil. 1.* Whence comes the spirit but from Christ. What doth the spirit do in the World? He shall glorifie Christ, for he shall take of mine, *Joh. 16.* What is the subject of the Old and New Testament, but a Christ to come, and come? What is the end of preaching, but to bring men to Christ? What use of ordinances, but to set forth Christ? Christ is the great center between Heaven and Earth, God, Angels, Men, and all creatures meet in him, and are all virtually in him. What is in the Saints, but Christ? What do the Saints love and believe in, but Christ? He is the fulnesse of him that fills all in all. *Ephes. 1. ult.*

Use. Let all creatures stand and gaze, and wonder and admire at Jesus Christ, he is the great wonder of knowledge. Oh, how should all our hearts be contracted in the beholding Jesus Christ? What delight should souls take in the studying of this Christ? Saints turn your eyes on the Lord, and see his glory. Whatever you know in the world, labour to know

know him : He is the *mystery* of all the glory of God. When thou hast sought over all the world, all the Gospel, thou shalt find God laying out nothing but Christ, all relations are founded in Christ, all excellencies are gathered up in him, as beams in the Sun. Come poor soul, whose eyes run to and fro the world to find comforts and happinesse, cast thy eye back, and see Heaven and Earth in one, and look what ever thy vast thoughts can fancie, not only to be in this world, but in the world to come ; or if thou canst imagine more variety, see that, and infinitely more shining forth from the person of the Lord Jesus. Ministers must cry up Christ ; Saints must adore him, Angels must stand amazed at him, all creatures must vail all their glory to him : Here is an object of love, a compendium of all glories ; here is one for a heart to be taken with, that is made of nothing but of several *mysteries* of glory.

Well might the Apostle, 1 Cor. 2. 2. *Phil.* 3. desire to know nothing but Jesus Christ ; to account all things but dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, he knew all things in him.

Oh what mad men are sinners, which reject this Christ, they slight all at once ; nothing is ever to be had without Christ, nothing but in Christ. Why stand you gazing on the toys

of this world, when such a Christ is offered you in the Gospel? Can the world die for you? can the world bring God to you? can the world advance you to Heaven?

Oh, let all cry out, none but Christ, study nothing but Christ, go to nothing but Christ, admire nothing but Christ; as he is the summe and substance of all things, so let him be the full and compleat subject of your Faith and Love, and Joyes and Delights; the more you see him, the more your hearts will be lost in love to him; you may see every day new *mysteries* of Love and Beauty in Jesus Christ, new depths of wisdom and fulnesse. Oh how could the Apostle choose when he thought of Christ, but break out as he did: Let them be *Anathema Maranatha*, that love not the Lord Jesus. Cursed for ever be those souls, that cannot love such a Christ; there can be no curse too dreadful.

But so much only in the general, which yet is worth your observation.

The particulars in themselves are so glorious, as they dazle my eyes; something might be said of them, but the depth and glory of them, can never be exprest.

To begin with the first.

God manifest in the flesh.

■ This is the bottom of all the *mysteries* in the

the Gospel ; every word speaks Paradoxes, God manifested is wonderful ; for no man ever saw God at any time ; But *God manifested in flesh*, that is a contradiction ; it is more absurd to nature, then to say, a spirit is flesh : God hath gone beyond us exceedingly in the work of our own salvation ; yet because that the thing is made known, we must pry into the *mystery* of it, and of all the *mysteries* in the Gospel, this is the first and greatest, the foundation of all the rest. In the opening of it, we must observe ;

1. What is meant by *God*.
2. What by *God manifested*.
3. What by *flesh*, and the *manifestation in flesh*.
4. How God hath manifested himself *in flesh*.
5. The eminency of this *manifestation* above all other.
6. The *mystery* of all this.

For the first : By God, is not meant God essentially, the very God-head indefinitely, but God personally in such a person ; though the whole God-head be included, yet it is manifested but in one Person ; to wit, the second Person Jesus Christ, because all actions are

done by Persons, not by Natures: Therefore this is a manifestation of God in his own Son. God's essence was never manifested, no man ever saw God, only, the onely begotten Son.

He that came out of his bosome to reveal him: And this is none other, but an exact description of Christ, which is, *God manifest in the flesh.*

Now secondly; by God is not barely meant an apparition of *God in flesh*, which he meant to lay down again upon an occasion; but as the word signifies passively, *conspicuus factus est in carne*, is made known and clear to us *in flesh*. This manifestation notes not a transient shew of God to us, but a clear and constant demonstration of God, and the only great and glorious first way of the manifesting God unto us, as the word signifies, a making of a thing to shine as the Sun to our eyes, that convinceth every man, of what he seeth: And this not only as a glimpse of God, which was very glorious, and so away; but as the clearest and richest way of discovery, that ever was, or should be in this world.

But thirdly, What this flesh should be is a *mystery*. Flesh is taken several wayes in Scripture.

First, For sin, and its sinful Nature we have:

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See the lusts of the flesh, that cannot be here meant, God hath made no appearance of himself in sin.

Secondly, Flesh taken for our humane Nature.

All flesh have corrupted their ways; *Gen. 6.* That is, all men, their Natures are defiled. So *Rom. 7.* in my flesh, dwells no good thing, that is, in my Nature, either in soul or body, or both.

Thirdly, Flesh is commonly taken for the weakness and infirmities of that Nature; *All flesh is grass, and the glory of the flower. 1 Pet. 1.*

And the Holy Ghost speaking of the *Egyptian* Horses, tells you, that they are flesh and not spirit, it is weak and not strong. So that,

Fourthly, How hath God *manifested* himself in *flesh*, not in the first sence, but the two latter, in appearing in our Nature, in taking our infirmities and weakness, sutable unto that Nature, (sin still excepted.) And what is here called the manifestation of God in flesh, is in other Scriptures parallel explain'd. As he is said to be *Immanuel, God with us. Mat. 2.* How can that be, but only because of being in the same common Nature with us. It is said, *the word was made flesh*, and dwelt

among us. *1 John 14.* it is the same phrase with this; *for the word was God, v. 1.* And yet it was made flesh, not that there was any transmutation of God into flesh, that was blasphemy, but only by reason of the union of flesh to him who was God.

This is farther exprest in the Apostle to the *Hebrews, Heb. 2. 16.* He took not on him the Nature of Angels, but the seed of *Abraham.* (ἐπιλαμβάνεται) He assumed not to himself; that is, God did not manifest himself, or appeared in any Angelical Nature, but in the Nature of men, and was made in all things like unto us, sin only excepted.

There is another clear place, *Phil. 2. 6, 7, 8.* Which the Apostle urgeth about the manner of this discovery, that Christ, though he were in the form of God, and thought it no robbery (that is, did God no wrong to say he was equal with him) yet assumed or took on him, or appeared in the form or the likeness of a servant, it is our Nature which was in subjection and servitude unto God.

So that now this manifestation of God in flesh, is no other then God in the second person, assuming to himself the humane Nature, and so revealing himself to men, suitably to their condition; and this is Christ. This manifestation is an effect of Gods assumption of
of

of our Nature ; so that this expreffion literally imports :

1. The affuming of our Nature , and the union with God ; God taking up us to himself as one, in our common Nature.

The full difcovery of God to us, in our own Nature, God acting forth his glory in our own flesh.

And all this is still but to denote out Christ, who is the person fet forth in the Gospel, who was with God , and was God , and dwelt among us, as the Apostle saith, that is, took up his Tabernacle of flesh in our Nature , thereby to converse with us ; Yet many would fain wrest this Scripture from the person of Christ ; for some of the old Interpreters , as *Beza* observes ; leave out ($\theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$) and put in only (δ) *quod manifeste est*) omit God, and put in which *mystery* manifested in flesh , thereby to take off the glory of Christ as God. *Erasm.* by flesh, here he understands the whole world, and by manifestation the Gospel intimating that this is the *mystery*, that God should be manifested to the world, but that is contrary unto this place, for he afterwards speaks of the Preaching of it to the *Gentiles*, that is, to the whole world.

It is doubtlesse , meant of God as in our Nature, making up the person of Jesus Christ ;

and this will yet appear if you consider the

4. Thing; that this was the greatest manifestation of God, that ever was; God was manifested in nothing like this; for look first over the manifestation of God in the first creation, there was but only some outside of God's glory discovered; nothing of Gods Nature: The whole world never saw what God was, truly by that: Indeed the Apostle saith, *Rom. 1.* That the invisible things of God, were known by the things that are made, even God's eternal power and wisdom; but these were manifested in an ordinary and common way; as a Picture shewes the art of the Painter, but yet you may not know his person. But in this, God himself is manifested; for first, here is not only so much of God manifested, as humane nature it self could demonstrate, for then it had been a poor manifestation of God, who can see God, in seeing all the men in the world, or in all the Saints in the world, in their flesh; but it sets out a special way of assumption of our Nature unto the person of Christ, who was God making these two natures, but one person.

2. This manifestation was in union of flesh in the nearest way to God himself; not as a lanthorn to hold the light only of God's glory; but as one intire person, to represent what

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what God is in himself; all the whole world was never united to God before, though God did manifest some thing to our Nature, as to *Adam*, yet God did never unite any creature to himself before, and though God was manifest to flesh, yet never in flesh before; that is the great *mystery*. God is manifest to his Saints, but he is not manifested in the flesh or in the Nature of any but Jesus Christ. This is so great a manifestation, as that God is become man, as it were by reason of the union of their Natures; *the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us*; as if God had relinquished his own Name and Nature, and lost himself in our Nature; he was found in the form of a servant. Now let us but think what a manifestation of God this must be, which is God not only letting forth himself in a way of communication, but God in union with the same Nature which we are in: Therefore Christ is called the express image of the person of the Father, not an image as he was the second person meerly; for so he was not the image, but God himself; but an image, because in that union of our Nature with God, there was the exactest discovery of God himself, as possible could be to the creature, *2 Cor. 3. ult.* Therefore Christ is called a glass, wherein a man may with open face, *behold the bright glory of God.* Put 6. How

6. How great must this *mystery* needs be ; God manifested in the flesh ? how is that possible ? flesh hides God , he is of a spiritual Nature ; it is as much as to say the Sun manifested in a cloud , or light manifest in darkness ; I confess, my heart could rather stand and admire, then speak any thing more. What ever is a medium of conveyance of any thing in Nature , must be proportion'd unto the thing it discovers ; as the air, not a mud wall conveys the light of the Sun to us ; flesh and God ; what proportion is there between them ; let flesh be but thought , God must needs be forgotten, for they are at an infinite distance, yea, contrary ; yet this is the *mystery*.

1. God not only setting out himself through flesh in a transient way, shining through it, but being made flesh, being one with flesh.

2. Not in innocent Nature, but in the likeness of sinful Nature, *Rom. 8.* 3. To manifest himself in the flesh of Rebels and Traytours, and honour that flesh which had so sinned , and was so polluted : this is a *mystery*.

3. To act in this Nature in the world, to dye , and be despised, and suffer the utmost contradiction of Sinners, who is able to fathom the depth of this *mystery* ? As one saith of the Trinity, they were like three sisters, which
spun

spun one piece of a garment; and onely one wears it; so had all these three an hand in the making of this Nature, but only Christ the second Person wears it, and all their glory is laid out in it; how one Person could be God and Man; how God should be put to death in our Nature to reconcile us to himself, flesh filled with the fulness of God, is beyond the apprehension of Men and Angels to declare. But we may tell that it is so, and admire it as we speak. Blessedness to be made a curse, Heaven let down into Hell, the God of the world shutting himself up, as it were in a body, the invisible God made visible to sense; he which hath all things in Heaven and Earth at his command, not have a house in the world; glory it self of no comeliness: What shall I say, all things become nothing, making it self of no reputation? And a thousand more such Paradoxes are wrapt up in this one expression. Oh how great a depth is in this glorious design of God; he was manifested to *Adam*, to *Moses*, and many others; but here was his utmost manifestation in our flesh.

For the nature of this manifestation, know:

1. It is not a bare manifestation of some attributes of God, but it is a manifestation of God in his own nature; the fullness of the God-

God-head dwelt in Christ bodily or really, Col. 2. Not that God is circumscribed in our Nature, but that the God-head it self is united to Christs body, and dwels in it, fills it, and abides upon him.

2. Neither is it a manifestation of God absolutely, as in himself; but as in order to reconciliation and salvation of souls. For God might have been manifested else in our flesh to have consumed us: But as the Apostle saith, *God was in Christ, reconciling the World to himself.* That is, God was in Christs Nature, as a God in order to the reconciling poor souls; and this is the great *mystery*. God was offended by our Nature, and God takes that Nature on himself, to reconcile us to himself, by himself. God himself will pay the price out of his own glory, for our offences only assumes our Nature, (as if it should be thought to act it out for us) and joyns it to his Son, and calls that Christ, and this is the Gospel notion of Christ, God manifest in flesh, in order to the reconciliation of poor souls. Thus God must satisfie himself, and save us, himself only takes our Nature to do it in, and calls it Christ a Saviour, when it is none other then God himself in our Nature, transacting our peace.

This *manifestation* is a peculiar one. For
First,

First, God was never manifested as one with flesh before ; he was not one with *Adam's* Nature, or with any of the first Creation ; but this is a manifestation of ownnesse.

Secondly, God never manifested himself in his God-head before, in such a manner : many of his glorious Attributes were seen and discovered, as his wisdom, power ; But no man saw God at any time, the only begotten Son revealed him, and the fulnesse of the God-head dwelt in no Nature bodily, but in our Nature which Christ had.

Thirdly, God never manifested himself in such a strain of love, as in our flesh ; it was the highest manifestation of Love, that ever was, that God loved our very Nature so, as to be one with us ; herein was his love manifested, and commended indeed, that he would come down in our Nature to us. And as one said well, God did so love the very Nature of his Elect, that though he had them not all with him in Heaven for the present, yet he must have their picture, of their own Nature in his Son ; to see them in, and love them.

1. *Use.* Then here is still ground of new admiration and wonder to souls ; God is come down, and hath left as it were his own habitation, to dwell among the sons of men : This is the first and great *mystery* of the Gospel,

Gospel. God out of infinite goodness, would make a revelation of himself to the world; to do it in his pure glory, would consume all flesh, especially seeing it was to be a manifestation unto sinners; but he cloaths himself with flesh, with our own Nature, and so appears to us, as an infinite love and sweetness; there be many great designs in this one.

1. By this he takes away the distance between his majesty and us, for he is now become *Immanuel*, God with us. The thoughts of God would have been sufficient terror; we could never have come nigh God, for we were infinitely below him. But now, Gods taking up our Nature as one with himself, and appearing as in our own form and likeness, hath broken down the wall of partition in Nature, as that which takes away the dreadful nature of Gods glory, yet reflects the real sweetness of it to us.

2. By this, God would deare and sweeten himself to his poor creature, and fit a way of sweet converse with us; if God had manifested himself in his own naked glory, still while we are sinners, we should not only be daz'led, but shrunk up to nothing; to see the Sun as it shines in its own lustre, would spoil the sight of the strongest eye.

But to look upon it, as an eclipse in water;

or

or through a glasse, that is not offensive; to consider God in himself, is to have our souls swallowed up, but to look on God in our nature, brings down his glory to our eye, and wots us to behold it.

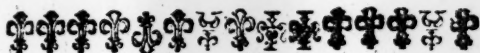
3. By this God hath raised up a statue and visible monument of his own infinite love to his Elect for ever: For rather then they shall want a sutable discovery of himself, he will come and take up their own nature, and be called after their names, as if he would be any thing to shew his love. This is the fullest visible demonstration of Gods love that ever was: It was more for God to take our nature, then simply to save us, more then let out a bare mercy, and grace in it self. For a King to save a murtherer from the Gallows by his own prerogative, and dispence with the Law, is not such an act of love and mercy, as to take the murtherers cloaths, and wear them as his richest livery, and give as a mark of honour, to his own Son, and to make an honourable order of the rags of that garment, as that King did of a Garter. God hath done more in taking our Nature; what love was this, that God will be no more God, as it were simply, but take up another Nature, rather then the brightnesse of his own glory shall undo us.

4. By this God would shew what he means

to bring us unto ; he took our nature up to himself, as a pattern or type of what he would bring all Saints unto ; God is come down in our likenesse, to bring us up into his likenesse. Nature was never so advanced ; it is the highest glory that is possible to be put upon nature, it is more then to fill all our souls with a fulnesse of Grace ; for our nature is united in a personal union with the second person, then which there cannot be more glory. What a fair step is now made, for the bringing the person up to the enjoyment of God.

Oh, let none say now, that God is not willing to save souls who is come down so low, as to live among us ; say not who shall go up to Heaven to bring down God, or down unto the deeps to fetch him up. God is nigh you, even in your own flesh : You may but turn about, and see God manifested to your own eyes ; we preach not fancy, when we lay out the riches of Gods glory in love and mercy. But as the Apostle saith, what we have seen, and what we have felt and tasted, that we declare unto you, 1 *John* 1. 1, 2, 3. Say not unbelieving soul, how shall I come nigh God ; why God is come to thee, he dwells in the Tabernacles of men. In a word, God is manifested in our flesh, that our flesh may be taken up into his fulness.

SERM.



SERM. IV.

1 Tim. 3. 16.

God manifested in the flesh, &c.

I Made an entrance on this the last day, but there are new mysteries yet arising, and no sooner doth one discovery passe but another comes on; this bottomless depth of Gods glory in the Gospel can be sounded by none but God himself; we have some manifestations of it, and that in flesh, or else we had never imagined what thoughts God had towards his poor Creatures; besides what hath been spoken as to the opening of the words, still this must be taken in, That it is not God in flesh mystically, but personally: Or else thus, It is not meant of God manifested in flesh, that is, in the whole mystical body of Christ, the Saints: But only God assuming our nature into the union of Christs person, and

and this had need to be observed, because all these places, where it is said, that *it pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell, Col. 1. 19. and that the fulness of the God-head dwelt in him bodily, Col. 2.* and this place is spoken of Christ mystically, or in his body, not personally, intimating that God dwels in the flesh of the Saints, as much as in the humane nature of Jesus Christ; and that there is no other distinction than of head and members.

Now to clear up this to you, I shall not need to go farther than this verse.

1. This is spoken of a thing that is already done; God is, or was manifested in flesh; now if it were meant of the whole mystical body of Christ, it must have been said God will manifest himself in flesh; for all that body is not yet made up, are not capable of any such manifestation, thousands of them being yet unborn.

2. God that is manifested in flesh, is justified in spirit, and seen of Angels, and preached unto the Gentiles, and beleevd on in the world, and received up to glory; now none will be so grossly ignorant as to attribute this to Saints; Saints are not preached to the Gentiles, nor believed on in the world, nor yet all received up to glory.

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3. God as manifest in flesh, did die in that flesh, was crucified to make atonement for sin, for this was a manifestation in order unto reconciliation; now who will say, that the bodies of the Saints did die, and were offered up in sacrifice, and did make our peace with God, which they must be said to do, if the meaning of the phrase be according to that interpretation.

We had need be wary in the letting out our thoughts on the Scripture, and fastening interpretation of things, seeing such strange consequences may follow.

And especially take heed of advancing Saints so as to lessen Christ; he must have the preeminence above Saints and Angels; and know that there is not only a distinction between Christ and Saints meerly as head and members, but a distinction of them in regard of their persons; for Christ is a head, in regard of his person, as the husband is the head of his wife, and though they be one body, yet he is a distinct person, and hath those incommunicable prerogatives that cannot be appropriated either to Saints singly, or as his body.

Gods manifestation to the flesh of Saints, is at second hand through Christ, of his fulnesse, that is, of that fulnesse which resides eminently and distinctly in his person, they receive grace
for

for grace. Indeed God is said to dwell in us, and we in God? but how? not as God dwells in Christ, but because he dwells in us by his own nature, and we by union with Christ partake of that fulness, according to our measure. God dwells in Christ immediately, and as a God he dwells in us through Jesus Christ, Christ letting out part of that fulnesse on our hearts. And thus God was pleased that in him all fulnesse should dwell, and by him to reconcile all things to himself, that in all things he might have the preheminance, and that his person might be distinctly admired above all Creatures.

The difference of Gods manifesting himself in flesh, that is, in Christs humane nature, and ours, lies in this, that this manifestation was as in an ordinance of life and salvation, making that person which had our nature the great conveyer of eternal peace and comfort through that flesh; so the Apostle, *Col. 1. 22.* In the body of his flesh, through death, he is to present us blamelesse and spotlesse to his Father; wherefore saith the Apostle again, *Heb. 2. 17.* It became him in all things to be made like his brethren, that he might be a merciful high Priest, &c. that is, that he might be fit to convey life and salvation to poor souls.

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But Gods manifestation in the flesh, or persons of the Saints, is as into several Cisterns which lie under the fountain to receive their proportion : God manifesting himself in Christs flesh is as of a fulness to fill all ; but in the person of the Saints it is but of several degrees and measures in order to a fulnesse ; that we may come to the fulnesse of the measure ; God hath manifested himself in our nature, that by that he might at length fill all our persons ; Thus is our nature joyned to the God-head, to be as a great pipe set at the mouth of some full spring, that through that God might run out his love and glory by degrees on our hearts ; first Christ receives it at once, and then through his Spirit discovers it in us.

In a word, Gods manifestation in Christs flesh was as a Saviour, a Redeemer, a Head, yea, as the Author of eternal Salvation to us. And this is the mystery of mysteries, he which reads this may very well cease to wonder at any thing else.

This is the foundation of all Gods other actings to us, the pole on which they all turn, all the discoveries of God are wrapt up in this one ; this unlocks Gods own Cabinet wherein all his designs lye ; Election, Redemption, Glorification, all is wrapt up in this, and made
clear

clear when we understand this one exprellion ; God manifested in flesh, it is the being of light, and immortality to light , at once it opens heaven and earth.

1. This is the foundation of our union with God and Sonship ; it is from hence that God is one with our nature, God is manifested as a Father in our own flesh ; we are Sons, because Christ is, he was really and naturally the Son, and we through him receive the adoption of sons ; *For he which sanctifieth and they which are sanctified are all one, therefore he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Heb. 2. 11.* So you have (*Gal. 4. 4, 5.*) God sent forth his Son in our flesh, that we might receive the adoption of Sons. God first takes our nature and marries it to his own Son, that so we might be united to him in his nature ; This is the Antitype and model of all relations ; God one with flesh , here is Father, and Son, Husband, and Wife, all relations meet in this one. 2. It is by this that we have communion with God, we had never seen God, had not he manifested himself thus familiarly in our own flesh ; communion is in things , and between persons futable ; There was no futablenesse between God and us, until he appeared in our own likeness, but now he made himself as it were fit for converse with the unworthiest Creatures ; there

there is a sweet sympathy between Christ and us, by reason that he dwels in the same house of clay, as it were with us; the Devil himself when he comes to the *Indians* as their God, to draw their hearts to worship him, appears in the form of a man, that so he might the better converse with them: The blessed God was willing to manifest infinite goodnesse to the Creature, and to converse with them, and that all terrifying apparitions might be shunned, he appears as a man, that so we may have intimate fellowship and communion with him; with what a holy boldnesse may souls draw nigh to God, and delight to behold him, and converse with him, now he is in such a habit of love and suablenesse unto our own senses? Why art thou strange, poor trembling soul, and standest afar off, as if it were death to draw nigh? of whom art thou afraid? What vision of amazement dost thou behold? Is God come down among men, and thou canst not look on him, lest thou die and perish for ever? Why, cast one look more, and be not discouraged? It is true, God is come down, but not in flaming fire, not in the armour of justice, and everlasting burnings; but cloathed with the garments of flesh, and sweetly desires to converse with thee after thine own form. Nothing can be a stronger

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motive

motive to allure poor souls unto terms of peace and love as this, that God is come down, not to consume them with the brightnesse of his glory, but to beseech them to see with their own eyes their eternal happinesse. Let all poor souls come and put in their hands, and they may feel Gods heart come, and behold life and immortality inhabiting the tabernacles of earth, and their own peace and eternal happinesse in their own flesh. Who can make any excuse now that he beleeves not? Why do souls now stand off? What can be desired by lost souls more? Oh that I might see God, say some souls, why, he is come down in the likenesse of man; he walks in our own shape; Oh, saith another, might I have my heart united to God; why, he is come down on purpose, and hath united our own nature to himself; God hath left all the world without excuse, he hath condescended below himself, that we might be above our selves.

In a word, by this the way of life is paved, and all the bars and blocks taken out of the way, all objections stifled in the birth, and answered before they are made; In this manifestation justice and mercy sweetly kisse each other, and have their equal joy, free grace, and merit, bounty and beauty, fulnesse and nothingnesse are made one, and triumph together,

together, the most hidden things revealed, and the worst things advanced, all things become nothing, and nothing all things; our nature which lay in rags enriched with the unsearchable treasures of glory; that flesh, which was so weak as not able to put forth a hand to save its own life, enabled to save millions of souls, and bring forth the greatest designs of God; and that flesh, which the Apostle calls *a vile body*, enobled and advanced beyond the nature of Angels: This, this is the great mystery hid from Ages, and Generations of men, that God lives in our flesh, and there acts all the parts of his glory. It is now no wonder that man is made one to God, and hath boldnesse through faith even to go into heaven, seeing God is come to carry them up with him; this was the first and great experiment which ever God did make of the fulness of his love, and glory, and we have now seen that in our flesh, which could never have been seen in it self.

Use 1. Seeing this is so great a mystery, what use can we make enough of it? doubtlesse it cannot be accounted lesse than a spring of unconceivable comfort to all poor souls, yea, in whatsoever condition they be; give me leave to extract some few grounds of strong support and joy, and we need no chymical art,

the consideration doth naturally drop the strongest spirits of rejoycing and encouragement, that can be possible.

Unto two sorts I shall especially direct this use.

1. To poor souls, that are yet in the embryo, under the first and lowest convictions of their own condition, who first for fear of the wrath to come, and would fain draw neer, but dare not touch the staffe of their eternal comfort; this point will yield water of life, at the first striking unto their poor souls, yea, and more then their souls are able to bear, or their doubts are able to answer, if they will but observe what the weight of this expression is.

2. To beleevvers, who are yet trembling at the sight of their many sins, and not yet cleared up in the spiritual notions of the Gospel.

For the first,

Let me speak to your drooping hearts, who long after life and salvation, and to see God as yours, more then life it self; what ails thy heart, who hath made thee afraid? what is that shakes thy knees, and dries up thy marrow, and breaks thy bones, and cuts thy joynts and nerves.

Oh, why dost thou start back in the day of thy trouble? Why, you will say God is mine

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mine enemy, I am a stranger to him, I shall never see a glimpse of the face of God, where all my happiness lies, sin hath brought forth death and misery in my soul ; Gods law condemns me, my own conscience accuseth me, and justice will have its due : These and such like, are the usual apprehensions of such convinced souls.

Yet notwithstanding all this, let the word of the Gospel be heard, let the truth be heard speak for it self : God is manifested in the flesh. Were thy soul lost seven-fold more then it is, the spirit of this expression is able to recover thee, and set thee upon thy legs, with a crown of glory on thy head.

I.. God himself is come into the world to offer the terms of love, and peace unto thy poor soul, because it was impossible for thee to come to God ; he is come to thee, and hath laid aside, as it were his own glory, while he converses with thee. This is no ordinary design that God hath to drive, when he is so wonderfully manifest in thy own flesh ; when God manifesting himself as formerly, in Thunder and Lightning, with an innumerable company of Angels, all having their swords of justice and vengeance drawn ; well might poor souls tremble, and run into corners, for who would ever be able to indure his

coming ; but loe poor soul, God is come in flesh, with an Olive branch of eternal peace in his hand, and bids you all be witnesse, he is not come to destroy, but to save : There be but two things in God, which might discourage poor souls from making approaches to him, the infinite brightnesse of his glory, whereby there is such a great distance between God and his poor creatures.

2. The infinite severity and exactnesse of his justice, whereby he is cloathed with vengeance ; but behold, these terrifying sights are gone, God hath made his appearance as a man, as one of us, and there shall not be the least distance between us ; and this God is likewise in our own Nature, to satisfie himself, and to gratifie his own justice ; for this is the natural meaning of this phrase ; that God hath taken flesh, to reconcile flesh to himself.

Bring out thy sins, and weigh them to the utmost aggravation of them, and take in every circumstance, both of law and Gospel, and set but this in the other scale, that God is manifested in flesh, to take away sin ; how would all thy iniquities, seem lighter then vanity, yea, be as nothing, in comparison to that which is laid down as a propitiation for these sins.

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It is most true, that nothing can reveal God at such a distance from a soul as sin; it being that which is most contrary to his blessed Nature, who is infinitely pure and holy.

Yet, here is the *mystery* of godliness; that God himself is become the satisfier of himself, and that in our own Nature: The utmost height of sin lies in regard that it is a contradiction to the immortal God; therefore it is so hainous, that the death of Angels and men could never expiate it, or reconcile sinners to God; but if God will dye in our Nature, and lay down himself as a rancome, how is the demerit of sin swallowed up in the incomprehensible redundancy of divine glory? and now, how doth grace superabound infinite wisdom laid down for satisfaction of the transitory and finite transgressions of the poor creature, the Law-giver suffering for the offences done against the Law; Doth not your hearts yet begin to leap within you, and the blood to come again in your faces, and strength into your sinews? In the apprehensions of this *mystery* of comfort, surely that soul is shut up in the utmost dungeon of unbelief, where never a beam of the glory of God shines.

But yet, will you have more, at least to leave
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you without excuse? This manifestation is not only a discovery in flesh, but to flesh.

And therefore, as he comes in our Nature to satisfie, so he comes in the Gospel, freely and fully to offer the terms of love, in the richest and most alluring expressions; And if God cannot satisfie, what will? What ever was done in our Nature, in order to redemption, was none other, then God acting out his own love, and grace, and glory. So the Apostle saith, the blood of God was offered, meaning, that the efficacy and life of all that offering, was from God in our Nature, using that as an Organ or Instrument to act by: Let unbelief come forth and make its plea, and let it dare to appear before this consideration; is not God enough to satisfie thy conscience? Oh, come nigh poor souls, see what an infinite ground of comfort is laid in for you, let the rich and glorious openings of the hearts; had God spoke from Heaven by himself, and called poor creatures, that lie in the midst of sin, crying out who shall deliver? and had he said, I will pardon you by my own prerogative? I made the Law, I will dispence with it, rather then you shall perish, what soul would not have been raised but up, even from the bottom of Hell? (and yet unbelief might scruple, and say, what shall

shall become of infinite justice, shall that be dishonored to save me?) But alas, that were not as much, as for God to come in our flesh, and come as a price, and pay himself before our eyes.

In the *Rom. 9.* The Apostle gives this as the great reason of all his actions, *he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy*; if there were nothing else but Gods will in the salvation of poor souls, who hath contradicted his will? But God hath not only shown his willingness, but hath really undertaken the effect of it by his God-head, and ingaged his own honour, and all his glory, in the transacting of it. Oh then, why shouldst thou fear to cast thy self into the infinite Ocean of Gods own glory, notwithstanding all thy vilenesse, God himself stands to lead thee by the hand, and hath put a price sufficient in the hands of justice, to stop the clamors against thee; and if thou yet fearest to come to God, yet come to thy own flesh; go to Christ as having thy own Nature, and knows how to pity thee. What can be said more, to draw on thy trembling heart? if God himself, and God so fitted and qualified, as it were, will not, must not men die and perish in unbelief, and who can pity them? that when Gods justice is satisfied, our Conscience should

be unsatisfied ; that when God is come down so low to us , we should stand questioning, wh ther we should come to him, what is it, but to say, all that God is, and doth, is lesse, or too little to comfort me.

2. Use reacheth to these poor beleevers, who yet stand afar off, and though they have hopes, yet have little Faith, and cannot so fully close in with the Gospel, nor draw nigh so boldly before God, through the fears of their own hearts. This point opens a door of rich entrance into the presence of God himself, the blessed God hath made a Portal into Heaven, not of Iron or Brasse, but of thy own flesh ; this is that new and living way which is consecrated from Heaven, and now, with what freeness and boldnesse of heart, mayest thou draw neer to God. Unbelief is strangled, after this consideration ; since God is come in the flesh, we may beleeve any thing, for this is the greatest impossibility that could be. Why is God come down so suitable, so lowly, if he would have thy poor soul be afraid to come to him, if he had any other intention, but to give strong consolation to the most sad souls, he would have appeared in another form, made use of another way, which should have bespoke such a design ? But what is the meaning of this at first sight :

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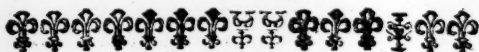
God manifest in flesh, but this, as if God had said; you will not come to me, I will come to you, and that you may see how reall and tender I am of your good, I have taken up your own flesh to make my great discoveries in; put your hand into my heart and see how love beats, and look into your own hearts, and see what you want, I have taken the same Nature, that I may more sensibly supp'y you, and that nothing may disquiet your hearts, or dazle your eyes, I have set out my own glory in love, and futableness to your capacities; this, and much more of the like expressions, are the very natural speakings of this blessed *mystery*. Oh, consider once again, what a heart of love was in this design, and what a ground of eternal comfort and support is there to thy heart in this; God is in thy own Nature, to take upon him all the miseries of thy nature, and to supply thy flesh with his fulness; this is none other then Gods heart leaping out into our bosomes; and as much as if God should have said expressly, poor souls, I cannot keep from you, I love your very Nature, I will be nothing, so you may be something, my glory shall not hinder me, but I will vail it, rather then it shall hurt you, I will take as much delight in your flesh, as in my own Son, so I may but shew my
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self kind and tender to you, and so I may have communion with you, and you with me, I care not, if I become one with you, live in your very flesh. Oh, that ever there should be a heart of unbelief, after these sensible demonstrations of divine glorie and love; wilt thou stand off now, doubt now, why what wilt thou have God to do? can he manifest himself in a more taking, alluring sutable way to thy condition? Is there any thing below flesh, wherein the great God can humble himself for our good? think of another, and a better way, or else for ever beleve. What, art thou shie of God, who is so sweet to thee? many souls think it a great part of their humilitie, to see their own unworthinesse, so as to draw back from God? Oh, it is pride to the utmost, when God hath made himself low, and is come so nigh to us, not to take notice of him, to draw back from such a blessed one, who draws so nigh unto us. I beseech you, gather up your spirits, and anoint your hearts with the oyl of gladnesse; for God himself is come to live among you, and professeth he will have no other life, but among you; there he will manifest himself in all his sweetnesse and blessednesse to your soul. Lay aside all coynesse and strangenesse of spirit, seeing such a way of familiarity
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and entercourse is made between you and God. It is very sad to see beleivers still so shie of approaching to God, so doubtful of their acceptance, when God himself stoops first, and is so in love with our acquaintance, as that he will be as we are. Let not such a Rock of strength be sleighted. But every day entertain sweet and pretious thoughts of this design, and inure your hearts, to a way of beleiving in this God, so fully discovered.

Lastly, Let men and Angels look about them what a mount of vision is raised up for the strongest and quickest eye to take the fairest prospect of glorie from, seeing God is manifest in flesh; If God begins so gloriously, how will he end? If God be so full of love as to come down in flesh, oh what matter of hope is laid before us of what he will be to us? What doth God mean to bring poor souls unto? If his heart and glory be let out so full at first, beleve, and wait for the most glorious openings of all Gods glorie, seeing that he hath took the first rise of his manifestations so sutable to us; he is now manifested in flesh, and hath laid out a world of glory in that, but he shall be manifest in himself.



SERM. V.

1 Tim. 3. 16.

God manifested in the Flesh, &c.

All divine truths, though they are but one in substance and nature, yet they are various in their manifestations, and have their particular glory and lustre that sparkles from them.

Here is in this verse one and the same glory of God discovered in divers administrations, and yet every one shining forth in a distinct excellency. God was manifested in flesh, made the object of shame and misery in the world, humbled and abased in our flesh; and that God is again justified in the Spirit, and set forth as an object for Angels to look and admire

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admire, and for the world to lay hold on and beleeve, and then this God is taken up again into glory, that is, advanced to that dignity which he seemed to leave and bid adieu unto for a while; and all this but a delineation of the various conditions and considerations of one and the same person Jesus Christ, and carrying on but one design in several representations for the good of poor sinners. This is that which the Apostle calls a great mystery, that is, the most hidden and profound design that ever God undertook to act, wherein all the depth of his counsels and heart was. For here is nothing else but God appearing in manifold shapes and forms to make poor souls partakers of himself, and raise up our conditions to a state of happinesse and glory.

Of the first of these particulars we have largely spoken, it being the prime and great mystery in this great order of mysteries. And yet there is so much in it as may again take up our thoughts with new wonderment, what can be more sweet and precious than a manifestation of God to poor Creatures; but for God to be manifested in flesh so futable to us, herein lies the mystery; that is, *to manifest*

1. God manifesting himselfe in a way of humiliation, as one that would lay aside his

his glory to come and live with us, and undergo the poorest and meanest condition for us.

2. In flesh, that God should make our own nature which had sinned against him, and was so infinitely below him, to be our great ordinance of reconciling us to himself, and the organ of union, and communion with his own blessed nature; for God to manifest himself unto flesh is not such a mystery, it may soon be conceived; God did manifest himself to *Adams* nature: but that God should be manifest in flesh is the *great mystery of godlinesse*; God himself taking flesh, and dwelling in it with all his fulnesse, and advancing that flesh into onenesse, and making that flesh more glorious than Angels; through that flesh opening all his Counsels, dying, and satisfying for the transgressions of flesh, and making the richest discoveries of love and free grace unto the sons of men, this may well be called a *mystery*, and a *great mystery*, an astonishing, and amazing expression: And all other mysteries are wrapt up in this, this is that which Angels do so pry into.

Let us view it a little more in the contrivance and depth of it; God had an eternal design to discover his infinite love to some besides himself, he therefore creates a world of

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Creatures, some rational, and only capable of love, others irrational, and serviceable to that one Creature which he makes the top of the whole Creation; set up one man *Adam* as a common person to represent the rest: gives him abundance of glorious qualifications, set him over the works of his hands made all subject to him, as if he were the darling of love. Now one would think Gods love and glory had been centred here, that he had taken up his abode for ever; but behold this man was but for a day, he fell from God, and all that were in him, even the whole world, and all these beloved ones that were in Gods eye from eternity fell with him into the same gulph of sin and misery; Gods face is hid, not a sight of him, but in flaming fire to condemn sinners, and execute vengeance; but God had a further reach of love, and wisdom, and out of this dark cloud let some glimpses of another discovery, though so darkly that few could spell it, or make any comfortable sense or application of it to their own soul: But by degrees God hints it out more, points out with the finger by types and shadowes, makes some models of it in outward Ceremonies, yet all hid and dark, that in three thousand years men were but guessing, and hoping through promises for a manifestation of God.

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And this is the meaning of that in *Ephes. 3.* that it was hid from Ages and Generations of men, that is, hid in Gods brest from them, they knew not what to make of this design; but at last God opens himself fully; and what doth all this workings end in? why, in this, that God is manifested in flesh; the whole of all this mystery is summed up in this, that God took the flesh of these poor sinners which he had so loved, and joyns himself to it, and calls it Christ a Saviour, and Redeemer of these poor sinners that lay condemned by the law, and under condemnation with the whole world; and God comes to lie in the womb of a Virgin, to be born as we are, to live in the world in the poorest and meanest estate, as if he had not wherewithall to lay his head, he dies in that flesh, and is glorified in it; and joyns it so nigh, as that there is a communion of properties between them; that attributed to God which is proper to flesh, as to be born, to suffer, that to flesh which is only proper to God; who can choose but wonder when he thinks of this phrase, that a piece of flesh should be called God, and God who is immortal, incomprehensible, be made flesh; and dwell among us; flesh infinitely provoking God, and God in the same flesh infinitely pleased and satisfied.

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God veiling himself with Flesh, which was a way to darken his glory, and yet unveiling at the same time the deepest and darkest of his designs in the most blessed and comfortablest way to souls; this swallows up our thoughts, and raiseth our faith to beleeve any thing, after this, when a soul can look on God as in his own flesh, and see him at one time as Saviour, and his Father, and his Friend, and his Reconciler, as his Justification, and his Sanctification, how can his heart contain within it self, but leap out of it self as one lost in the admiration of it; all the actings of Salvation turn upon this hinge; when Christ was born into the world, the Apostle saith, *Joh. 1. 14. We saw his glory as of the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth,* noting out that at first sight of him, so much glory sparkled from him as could appear from none but a God walking up and down the world, or at least his own natural Son that came out of his bosome.

I will adde but two things by way of use to shut up this point.

Use 1. Study this mystery above all things, nothing so pleasant, nothing more deep, come but once to know the mystery of God in our flesh, and thou wilt desire soon to be taken into fellowship with it; the Apostle desired
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to know nothing but Christ, and him crucified, this is none other than the Lord Jesus; whatever expression is given of godlinesse, it is none other than God in Christ; what delight should souls take in the looking on their own happinesse? with what joy should we draw water out of this well of Salvation; the great reason of the shallownesse of our comforts, the shortnesse of our hopes, and faintnesse of our spirits, the lownesse of our graces, is from the not-knowing this mystery: we look on our selves, on our present attainments, at some scattered promises, but not fully on God in Christ; God in our own flesh, a soul would see here a Fountaine opened of grace and comfort that could never run dry.

1. God hath set our own nature as a vast pipe to his God-head, that it may flow out in all manner of fulnesse upon our hearts; our flesh stands not for a cypher, but it is an Organ of life and grace to us. If we saw such a fulnesse in our own flesh laid in on purpose to enrich us, would we be so poor, want so much? we eye this, and that, but know not that all the fulnesse of God lies in our own Flesh, to be emptied upon us.

2. God hath in our own flesh laid out the model and draught of what he will do unto
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all his Saints for ever ; for he made Christ the great Epitome of all his design , and thou mayst see through thy flesh at once , what thou art design'd unto, and how high and rich thou shalt be, what a design God hath upon thee ; for look what was done to our Nature in Christ, shall at length be done to all the persons of the Saints in Heaven. If we knew this, how high would our hopes be, and how lofty our expectations, after the utmost enrichings of the great God ? For to what end hath God made flesh so glorious, but to shew what he will by that make us.

3. What ever God is in himself, through our flesh, he is to us, if he be good, or merciful, or gracious, or powerful, &c. For this manifestation is a suiting of all that God is to us, that when we eye this *mystery*, we may see what ever God is acted out to the comfort and benefit of our own poor souls ; God himself making all his attributes and glory serviceable, to the good ends of his poor creature, and that in and through their own flesh.

Oh, my Brethren, let not such a strong hold be passed by, not such a treasury be unlookt into : In this *mystery*, you have Heaven brought down to Earth, yea, more then Heaven ; For God himself is come down

to open his heart to you. Let nothing take off your eye from this, set Faith on work immediately to eye this fulness; one mite of Faith on God in Christ, that is in our own Nature, brings in more grace and comfort then a thousand considerations of any thing else; yea indeed, it is the only spiritual way of conveighing all comfort to the soul; there is no saving knowledge of God, but as he is manifest in Christ, and do not think that God is gone out of flesh, that is, that Christ hath left his humane nature behind him, and is only gone up in his spirit to Heaven, nor but this flesh of thine is received up into glory, and stand as an eternal monument of love, and is the great Ordinance unto the end of the world of life and salvation, and God shall come again in the same flesh, though not as abased, but glorified. Oh Brethren, what successive sweetnesse, and without any intermission, would flow out on your hearts, if you did by Faith lay your heads at this pipe: How canst thou want grace, when thy own flesh hath it without measure; and on purpose to fill thee? why art thou sad, when thy own Nature is made reconciler of thee to God? Brethren, you live not like men under this design, that know what such a *mystery* means, you would see enough and to spare, a redundancy

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dancy of every thing you want in this Lord Jesus ; and the floods of immortality and glory would soon break over your unbelief, and swell your hopes and joyes, beyond all bounds. God hath made our Nature a Myne of all sorts of rich and pretious graces, that by digging into it, we may see our estate. Whatever the person of Christ hath in himself, is all to convey unto us, Oh, that you were but insighted into these glories ! had but acquaintance with this discovery of God, how blessed might you live ! What a happinesse must it needs be, to see God in our own Nature, and our Natures in him, and to behold nothing else but love, acting in a fulnesse of all grace and glory, to a poor soul !

Let your whole spirits be carried out thus fully to Jesus Christ, and with both hands, even with heart and soul claspe about Jesus Christ, and you will soon find depths of love and grace, power and sweetness, overflowing and swallowing up your heart.

A soul hath space enough to expatiate its self, and hath a sure Rock to rest on ; other things are narrow, and circumscribe the thoughts ; all the promises of particular graces are gathered up in this one manifestation of God. Think upon love in this or that communication, either in outward or inward
graces,

graces ; still we are shut up, our thoughts can go beyond all that ; but God manifested in Christ, there is room enough for a soul to let out his utmost thoughts, and to enlarge his affections, and yet there is no taking in by one soul, the vastnesse of this *mystery*, or the compleatnesse of this fulnesse ; When a soul hath got out grace enough for this condition, and yet still that fountain runs, and knows no proportion ; if we would therefore study to know how to use this *mystery*, we should find our comforts exceeding our doubts, and our supplies our wants. When Saylers are out in the Ocean, they fear not, though storms arise, and the Ship toss ; But when they come nigh land, then they fear, Sand and Rocks then lie undiscovered. So it is with a poor soul, as long as he launcheth out by Faith into the fulness of Christ ; it is safe in the midst of the greatest storms, all the fears of unbelief are, when we come nigh the shore of our own duties and performances, and come to see the land of our weak workings, then we come into shallow water, and stick fast in misprisions, and are scattered by doubts and fears, because there is not water enough, not a stream deep enough to bear up the burthen of our sinking and dying souls.

That we may therefore know how to act our
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Faith to get strong consolation & full supplies.

1. Faith must go directly unto God as in our flesh, that is, unto Jesus Christ, and take in nothing by the way which may divert its strength, never stop until it fasten on this fulnesse of God in Christ. For when the eye of Faith rolls here and there, and takes in but partial sights of Christ, as in some particular promise only of this and that grace, and doth not fully set on Jesus Christ, as God in our Nature, it loseth the efficacy of that influence, which also would come; and besides, it divides the strength of its own act, which is most strong, as it doth adæquately rely on Jesus Christ, and singly closeth in with him; for the truth, is, promises and actings, or what ever way God lets out himself, is but to allure and draw on the soul to an immediate close with the person of Jesus Christ.

2. Know, that though there be some things in Christ, which are most proper for some acts of Faith; as Christ dying, and crucified for a recumbents Faith unto the satisfying of his soul, in the pardon of sin; yet the strongest & purest acts of Faith are these, which take in Christ as such a person, laid out in all his glory, and all his offices as suitable to the condition of the soul. And the more comprehensive acts of Faith are taken in Christ in

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his fulness, the more are the enjoyments of it, and the more lively the influences; As the more Iron is set at the advantage of the strongest point of the Loadstone, and adæquately laid for an immediate close, the stronger impression is left; and the more powerfull it is attracted; all such electrical bodies, work (as all other) according to the propinquity, immediation, and adæquatenesse of the approach of other things of a suitable Nature to them. Therefore the Apostle saith, *Heb. 12.* looking unto Jesus, *the Author and finisher of our Faith*, standing and beholding as with a stedfast eye, what he is, from first to last, as the Author and finisher of our Faith. So in another place, *1 Pet. 2.* *To whom come as to a living stone, we are built up &c.* These loose and transient glances on the actions and offices of Christ, bring in but loose and ordinary communications; but hearty and full out-goings to him, as God is in him, and as such a person, thus and thus qualified from Heaven, carries power and life with it. And these vast and serious spirits who are not content only with flashy or secondary actings on Jesus Christ, but are longing to be diving into the depths of Christs glory and excellency, carry along with them impressions of an abiding and transforming

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forming Nature. Oh, therefore be ambitious only of apprehending what is the riches of this glorious *mystery*, and let not course and common apprehensions of Christ content you.

Some think it a carnal apprehension of Iesus Christ, to know him as in flesh, it is true, to apprehend him absolutely so, as only having flesh, and going up and down in weaknesse: But to consider Christ as God manifested in flesh, and that flesh acted by God, and filled with God, is a true and spiritual apprehension of Christ, and that wherein lies one of the greatest mysteries of godlinesse; for we are not to understand this as a mystery only for that time: As if God came and once manifested himself in flesh to satisfie for the sins of his Elect, and so to leave it down again, but very flesh remains to this day, and shall remain, and all the spirit and life which the Saints shall have unto the end of the world, is to be conveyed through that person which hath our flesh; yea, the Spirit it self dwells in it, and is conveyed through it; therefore look upon this, as a standing manifestation of God to your souls, and believe perfectly on it. See but how God hath fitted an object for faith in this mystery, This expression that God was manifest in

Flesh is so laid out, that it doth as it were create Faith in every Soul that looks in it.

1. What is fitter for a poor soul who hath nothing than God himself, who is the utmost object of faith, the happinesse of the poor creature depending on his relying on God. But,

2. Because God himself is offended, and the soul cannot find ground for faith in God himself, you have God manifested in our own Flesh, that is, God takes up our nature, and joyns it to himself as one person, and lays out that before faith: So that here is God, and God suited to the particular state and condition of the sinner; and not only barely acting towards us, but manifested in the greatest love and fulnesse to us; whatever may feed the humour of unbelief is destroyed in this: For God hath laid in that in our own nature, which doth not only suit, but swallow up the wants and miseries of poor souls.

There be but three things can hinder faith.

1. The infinite exactnesse of divine justice which must be satisfied.

2. The exceeding unworthinesse of the soul.

3. And in the sight of both these, the want of a Mediatour, or some suitable person which

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which may stand between the sinner and God, which the soul may go unto, and first close withall, before it deals with the infinite glory of God himself.

Now in this mystery faith is fully satisfied.

1. God hath seemed to passe by, and overlook the unworthinesse of his Creature, himself disdainis not to be as they are, to wear their own flesh; and

2. That his justice may be satisfied, and their hearts quieted, he hath by the union of that flesh set up a person which is nothing but fulnesse, and righteousness, love, and bowels to receive the first acts of our faith, and to have immediate union, and communion with us, and yet still this is God himselfe manifested to us; and though we pitch not our faith immediately on God, yet at last we come to him, and our faith lives in God before it is aware, as it were, through the sweet intervention of that person which is God himself called but by another name.

Take Faith as it lies in adherence and recumbency, or, as it may be sometimes taken, for an act of assurance both have enough to lay hold on in this mystery: For the first, Take the poorest soul that groanes under the saddest wants, and burthens, and seems by sin to lye at the vastest distance from God,

yet he hath ground here to believe, that is, to go unto, and rely, and cast himself freely and fully, with the greatest confidence on Jesus Christ: For here is none other than God himself offering himself as the righteousness and riches of such a poor soul, and that in such a way as he shall be judge with his own eyes; and for the faith of assurance what a ground is there for a soul to be perswaded of all the reality and truth of Gods intentions, seeing he hath so sensibly demonstrated it in taking our own flesh; if God cannot content himself, who shall? And he professeth he is pleased, and delighted in that Union, and satisfaction by it, which he hath in our nature; *This is my beloved Son, in whom my soul is well pleased, Mat. 3. ult.* Doubtlesse Gods heart must needs be much in, yea, and infinitely set on the salvation of the souls of poor sinners, seeing he hath made such an overture to advantage it, as the taking up our flesh which was so far below him; and what can poor souls now believe otherwise, but that God cannot be content with his own honour and glory alone, but he must impart it, yea, and to those which have been the most unworthy, and most contrary to him and his glory.

So that Beleevers, you see, how heaven and earth,

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earth, God and Man, are combined together to do you good, and what opportunity have you of living gloriously upon God in your own nature; Faith desires no more but an encouragement, and a person to close with, and in both you have a futableness from this, that God is manifest in flesh; that God is manifested in such a way as flesh, is enough to move any heart to beleieve that he is as he acts; but this expreſſion doth not only ſtir up hope, but fits the very perſon ſo ſweetly, as if one would deſire, or propoſe a thing to ones deſires, it could not be more qualified than this, that God is manifested in flesh; for here is God himſelf brought down to our terms, and made ſubject to our own propoſitions. Oh that this exhortation might be of force but to improve this glorious deſigne to the ſupplying of all your wants; and the making up all your loſſes; and when you make uſe of Chriſt, go not to him as one who hath ſomething, but all things; yea, let faith have its courſe, and hinder it not from a full and immediate laying hold on the riches and fulneſſe of God himſelf, both for Juſtification and Sanctification; for it is God himſelf which in our fleſh is made the proper object of your faith.

Uſe 2. That ſeeing God is manifeſt in
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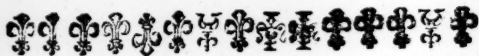
flesh, that is, so blessedly in Christ for us, labour to get a manifestation of God in your own flesh; for this is the comfort to your souls: what if God be made one with a common nature in Christs person if he be not made one with my spirit? You hear often that there is a mystery in Gods being discovered in Flesh, but who among you have had the manifestation of this God in your own souls? The Apostle speaking of the sweet fruit of his sufferings, says it lay in this, that the life of Christ was manifested in his mortal flesh; doubtlesse Gods design of manifesting himself in flesh in general, was, that by that he might manifest himselfe to flesh in particular; and these soules can have no special comfort in this, that God is manifest in their nature, (that is, in Christ) except they have a special discovery of this God to themselves; actions are futable to the being of things: if God be in our nature, he will act in that nature what may be most glorious to the good of soules. Look to your own hearts, what manifestations of God are there; Dost thou say, thou beleevest that God was manifest in flesh? And yet there is not a glimpse of Gods glory in thy own heart; why, the Devils can say as much and perish; why hath God taken up our nature? What, for

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for himself? No: But by that as a medium he might communicate himself to our persons. Let not souls flatter themselves with general notions of the Gospel, and the mystery of it; If God be not in thy person, as truly, though not as fully, as in thy nature, thou hast no particular comfort from this design; when *Paul* speaks of the Gospel in general, he speaks particularly of the manifestation of it to him as his comfort, *It pleased God to reveal Christ in me, Gal. 1.* whatever is done in our nature in common is to be done spiritually (though not literally) on our persons; and if God be revealed in Christ, and that Christ be not revealed in us, all is nothing; the end of God is by that to bring up our hearts to himself, and that we may know what is the riches of that glory which he intends to communicate by the first fruits of it in our own souls.

SERM.

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SERM. VI.

1 Tim. 3. 16.

Justified in the Spirit, &c.

HAVING spoken of the first and great mystery of Godlinesse which the Apostle reckons up in this verse, that *God was manifested in flesh*; Another presents it self before our eyes to be admired; In the things of the Gospel you go from glory to glory; you can no sooner come out of one room of blessednesse, but you step into another as glorious; every step to heaven is a new opening of Gods glory; What would a soul expect more than a manifestation of God, and in flesh so fitly for his good? Who would not sit down under the shadow of this happinesse and go no farther; but yet this is not all, this God is set forth in another

another mystery, as, *Justified in the spirit*; before one is able to go to the bottome of one mystery he is led into the bosome of another; so thick and fast doth the glory of God break in upon the poor soul, as he is not able to keep his eye fast on one thing, but another as glorious comes to be presented. Brethren, what a blessed thing is it to live in God, to be viewing the mysteries of godlineſſe? Seeing God himself is laid out before your eye as in manifold manifestations of his own glory; Saints may do nothing else but ravish their hearts with the diversity of heavenly light which breaks forth from the bosome of God.

One would think there needed no other mystery to take up the thoughts of a Saint but this, that the blessed God is manifested in flesh; Who is able to reach the fulneſſe of this discovery? But yet you have another mystery as great and amazing springs out before your eyes, to astonish you, that this God was *justified in spirit*.

The first respects his humiliation in our flesh: The other the beginning of his exaltation; and yet these are onely various expressions of Jesus Christ our Mediator.

There was two great things to be done for the salvation of sinners: Satisfaction, and
Justi-

Justification; God now, in regard of these two considerations, manifests himself as in two forms: First, in flesh, as abased and humbled, that in our own nature he might satisfie for our sins, and lay a ground-work of eternal communion with us; and then as a testimony of the reality of this satisfaction he was justified by or in the spirit. So that you have Christ set out in these two considerations, as standing in our own flesh to bear the guilt, and charge, the misery, and punishment of our sins, and as discharged and justified from all these by the spirit.

There be those things to be opened.

1. What it is to justifie.
2. What meant by spirit.
3. How God is said to be *justified in spirit*.

For the first, to justifie, or to be justified, are words though commonly spoken, yet much mistaken; *Bellarmino*, and the Jesuits take it ever in a Physicall sense, for the infusing habitual principles of grace in the heart, and so make it all one with Sanctification, that so by that they might have a way of setting up their own righteousness equal with, it not above, the righteousness of Christ; and yet it is not to be denied but sometimes this word signifies to make just. But the common and usual signification is,
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first, to pronounce or declare one just; So (*Luke 16. 15.*) *wisdom is justified of her children*, that is, all the sons of wisdom will vindicate her from all the false aspersions cast on her by the sons of folly in the world, and pronounce her righteous, that there are the issues of life in her ways.

That thou mayest be justified by thy sayings, *Rom. 3. 4.* that is, declared to be just. So in *Mat. 12.* saith Christ, *out of my words thou shalt be justified or condemned*; that is, pronounced just according as thy words are good.

Secondly, It is taken *sensu forensi*, in a legal sense, for the acquitting or absolving a Malefactor from the guilt and punishment of the Law; *Isa. 5. 23.* he which justifies the wicked, and condemns the righteous is an abomination to the Lord; speaking of the Rulers, and these which sit in judgment, that is, he which lays guilt on an honest man, but acquits a wicked man.

How is a man said to be justified this way?

1. When as he is falsely accused, and is declared by thy Judge not to have done the fact, but to be righteous, then he is justified from that act.

2. When a man is really accused, and yet for, and in consideration of some other thing is acquitted and absolved from the guilt
and

and punishment of that which was laid to him, then he is said to be justified also.

For the second thing; what is meant by *Spirit*?

This word is likewise taken divers ways in Scripture : Sometimes for the soul and life of a man ; *Into thy hands I commend my Spirit, Psal. 31.* Christ cried, and gave up his spirit, *Mat. 27.* that is, his life departed from him. But especially it is taken these four ways.

1. For the whole divine Nature, or the God-head. God is a spirit, that is, the Nature of God is spiritual, unknown to flesh.

2. It is sometimes taken for the divine Nature of Christ; so the Lord is that spirit, that is, Jesus Christ is that spirit, which is opposed to all the outward and fleshly ordinances of the Law.

3. It is taken for the Holy Ghost, or third Person of the Trinity, as distinct from the Father and the Son. There be three that bear witness in Heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Spirit. *1 John 5.* It is the spirit which bears witness; for he is truth. I will send the Comforter, even the spirit of truth, *John 14.* And I will pray the Father for it. *John 3.*

4. Taken for the product, or work of the Spirit; what is born of the Spirit is Spirit, that

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that is of the same Nature with the Spirit it self. So that now, for God to be justified in the Spirit, is not meant as if he had any righteousness infused in him, which he had not before, but that he was justified, that is, declared to be righteous, one who had no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, and that he was absolved from all that charge of the guilt and punishment of sin; which was laid upon him, and one who had finished his course, and done his work compleatly, both satisfied the law, and the justice of God; and that in or by the Spirit, that is, his God-head, or by the vertue and merit of his divine Nature, which made all he did, efficacious and satisfactory, the Spirit it self bearing witness of it, and fully discharging him from what was laid upon him.

For these words, (as one saith) to be brought in answer to an objection, which might be made on this, that Christ was God manifest in flesh, that is, humbled and abased, or else he could not have suffered; why hence, the world thought he was a deceiver, that he was not such a one as he pretended, took upon him as a malefactor, and used him so; why, but he was not so; for though he was manifested in that base and low way, and so united and clouded in flesh, yet he was justified in
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the spirit; they saw not that inward glory and power which was in Christs Nature, but what ever men esteemed of him, yet the spirit it self justified him.

But seeing this is so great a *mystery*, set in the second ranck of the deep things of God, we had need look more narrowly into it, and see what the Scripture saith concerning this; how Jesus Christ may be said to be justified.

This is to be premised in general, that it is spoken in opposition to his humiliation or manifestation in flesh; for in that he seemed to be condemned to walk up and down as a sinner, one which was the shame of the world; and therefore he is said to be justified in the spirit; that is,

1. Internally, what ever he was without, yet within he had a spirit of glory, his outside was mean, but his inside blessed.

2. Externally, he was notwithstanding all the visible actings of him in the world, and the misapprehensions of wicked men, yet the spirit did still justify him, and clear him, and declare him to be righteous.

Two things were laid on Christ, which he had need to be justified from.

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a friend of Publicans and Sinners, one which blasphemed, when he said he was the Son of God, one which had a Devil, and wrought all his miracles by the Devil.

2. The state he stood in under our sins, have had the guilt and the punishment of them laid on him, whereby he stood as a visible malefactor, and under the visible sentence of condemnation.

For Christ was really charg'd with the satisfaction of our sins, and was liable to all that the Law could say to us for them. Now he had need to be justified from this, by having an acquittance and absolution by the spirit of God.

Now, in both these ways may Christ be said to be justified.

1. He was justified in the spirit, from all those wicked imputations his enemies laid on him; none were accounted of so vile, as Jesus Christ; all the reproaches that could be invented, were laid on him, they called him a Devil commonly. Now see how he was justified in the spirit; that is, first, how clear he was within in his spirit, no guile was found in his mouth.

2. By his Godhead, what bright sparkling of God, was in the face of Jesus Christ, to the conviction of his enemies; many times when

when they came to catch him, they were catch'd by the beauty of his glory, and faine to confesse he was a righteous one, and that never any spake or acted like him; in all that ever he did in the acts of his humiliation, he was justified in it, God clearing it up, that he was the true *Messias* and Saviour of the world; when he was born, wise men came by the spirit to see him and worship him, when he was baptized the spirit came down visibly on him, and proclaim'd from Heaven, that he was the beloved Son of God, with him he was infinitely well pleased, Nay, come to the uttermost degree of his humiliation, when he hung on the Crosse between two thieves, by his spirit he converted one of them, and made them acknowledge he was the righteous man, and they only the sinners. In a word, what ever he did or spoke, the spirit did act it in him, and justified him in it. *I speak not of my self, but God testifies of me, John 6.* He was begotten in the womb by the spirit, led up and down in the spirit, offer'd up by the eternal spirit, raised from the dead by the spirit. That place in the *Romans*, 1. 3. cleers up this; *He was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the spirit of holinesse in his Resurrection.* It is a place which answers this; *He was of the seed of David*

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as concerning the flesh, but declared to be the Sonne of God in the spirit, when he did rise again; as much as to say, he was God manifest in flesh, that is, in weaknesse, and yet he was justified by the spirit of holinesse, to be the son of God. Christ would often call himself the Son of God, and for that, he was called a blasphemer, and for that, they sought to put him to death, as if they had said, we will try that, thou canst not die if thou be the Son of God: And so when he was put to death, they were confirmed, that he was a deceiver; But now, when he rose again of himself, then he was declared with power, to be the Son of God, that is justified by the spirit of holinesse; or the holy spirit; that spirit did declare, that he was full of holiness: But this was the least part of Christs justification.

2. Christ stood under the charge of all the sins of the Elect, as a common person, and so was by God himself condemned; he bore our sins on the Tree, in his own body, that is, was really charged with the guilt, and the punishment of it, and though he was not guilty of any sin, yet was Punished as the greatest malefactor, standing as our surety. Christ may seem to be condemned, even by God himself, and he must come off clear, or else

else lye under the punishment of it for ever; for once the charge was laid on Christ, the law looks to him.

Now Christ that was thus visibly condemned, he is justified in the spirit, not only that he was appointed to satisfie; but that he had satisfied, and took away these sins; and it was reason, that if God did charge him with the debt of our sins, that after he had paid it, he should be acquitted and declared just, and the Justifyer of these, for whom we undertook: Now this is the great meaning of this phrase; that whereas Christ was manifest as God in our flesh, and so stood under the guilt of our sins, he was justified in his spirit, and cleared by God, that he had fully satisfied him.

That whereas God was manifested in flesh, that is, as the Apostle saith, *Rom. 8. To condemn sin in the flesh*, that same God-man was also justified in the spirit, that is, freely and fully acquitted by his God-head from all these sins, and so taken-up into glory. And Christ himself in a Prophecie, when he was to dye, and be judged as a condemned man, he comforts himself with the thoughts of this; *He is near that justifies me, who shall condemn? Isa. 50. 8, 9.* So likewise the Apostle speaking of Christs Resurrection, *he was put to death in*
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the flesh, but quickned in, or by, the spirit, 1 Pet.
3. 18. a place fully paralell unto this, *Paul*
saith, he was justified in the spirit, and Peter,
that he was quickned in the spirit; both mean
one and the same thing, viz. that new life
which Christ had from the dead when he left
all our sins behind him and rose again; and
by spirit is meant his God-head or divine
nature, whereby he was both raised from the
grave, and the guilt of sin together, he was
quickned and justified; as a Malefactor, by an
absolution receives a new life after the sentence
of death: and this work of justifying Christ
is especially laid on Christs resurrection; who
when he dyed was a condemned man, but
when he rose again appears as a righteous
man, which had finished his work. For
justification implies and supposeth a former
guilt laid to ones charge of which he is
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bore our sins, and stood as one condemned,
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fied from the guilt of what was laid on him,
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under the greatest attainer that ever man
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of all this in his own soul ; therefore though he was manifest in flesh as one condemned in that flesh , yet the power of his God-head raised him up from under the power of death , and declared him as a righteous person ; one that was accepted for, and that had compleatly satisfied for poor sinners. And as at first conversion, we pass from death to life , that is, from an estate of death and condemnation to an estate of life and justification ; So did Christ at his Resurrection, from an estate of death and guilt which was laid on him to an estate of life, and glory and, justification from sin ; for had there been any sin unsatisfied for, he could not have been justified.

Use 1. Is to inform us of the greatnesse of this mystery, that God should be justified in spirit ; That God should manifest himself is a wonder, and especially in flesh : But that we should be justified, that implies a guilt, some default ; and doubtlesse this is one of the wonderfullest discoveries of his love to souls. How can God be said to be justified ? who can imagine any evil in the Almighty, who finds folly in the Angels ; they are not able to justify themselves in his sight ; but the mystery is in this, that God himself which was in our flesh, (which is none other then Christ) he is also justified for us. God
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in our flesh takes upon him the charge of our debts, and by his own spirit justifies himself.

Oh, how are poor souls raised at these expressions. All the works of our salvation are done by God himself, he taking that on him, and acting over that in the person of his Son, which must be particularly done in them.

Two things were to be done to save us; Satisfaction, and Justification, payment of debt, and discharge of bonds. Why now, God comes in our Nature, and is both punished and justified, as if he had done the offence, not we: God is justified, instead of us, and dies when it was our condition; let our hearts not be commonly affected with this mystery.

2. *Use.* This mystery raiseth again from the dead, the hopes and joyes of poor souls, and in the midst of all their sins, and apprehensions of wrath, gives the strongest ground for Faith in their justification. Why was God (or God in Christ) justified, he had no need of such an act in himself, no guile was ever found in his mouth, he was a Lamb without spot; but all this is to denote what God was for us, that he might be to us. All the acts that were to be done on us, were first done

done to God in our Nature, acted on Jesus Christ; and he was but an image of what is to be personally done to us; yea, whatever consideration he passed under, it was as in our stead, and we are to reckon our selves as sharers with him. yea, as really partakers with him, as if we had acted it in our own persons. When he dyed, he stood under an act of attainder for sin, he acted nor was capable of none, but only stood there for us, and our very sins, on the Crosse were crucified with Christ, and satisfied for by him, as if we had paid the utmost farthing with our own hands; so when he was justified by the spirit, we were justified. He was justified as a common person in the room of all the Elect, as he dyed as a common person for their sins.

In these two expressions, you have all the mystery of Redemption, and the reconciliation of sinners to God.

1. God was manifest in flesh, to bear our sins, and to be abased and humbled for them, whereby he might satisfie himself, and then in the token of acquittance, and absolution of us from all these sins, he is justified in spirit, and all the objections of unbelief, are answered in this. Saith the soul, how shall my sins be satisfied for? Why God is manifest in flesh for that end, to lay down an infinite price

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price to his justice ; But how shall I know that my sins are taken away, and that I am justified from them ; why, that God was justified in spirit, that is, the spirit which speaks nothing but truth, and who knows all things, did publicly declare that there was a compleat righteousness obtained for sinners, and did pronounce it to Christ, as in the name of all the Elect.

It is worthy further search into this, what Christs being justified in the spirit, amounts unto, for the comfort of poor souls, in regard of their justification, that so we may all see, what full and plenteous redemption that is in Jesus Christ, and what matter of holy triumph we have, in regard of our own justification.

First, that Jesus Christ should be justified, and that for us, or in our name, as the Attorney takes up the Bond in Court for his Client ; it is as good in Law, as if the party himselve were there to receive the verdict and see the act inrolled. And observe, it was more for Christ to be justified, a harder thing then for us ; for he had the sins of the whole world of the Elect upon him, and yet Christ beleev'd his justification ; in that former place ; *Isa. 50. he is near that justifies me.* Well mayest thou beleve the particular

justification of thy person, seeing Christ was justified for thee before-hand; he was that great surety, that stood bound to pay thy debts, and he was publicquely acquitted for thee. And this is certain, that Christ being justified at that moment, all the Elect were virtually and really justified in him; that act of God which pass'd on him, was drawn up in the name of you all; and when you believe, this Indenture is shown unto your hearts.

But secondly, in that he was justified in the spirit, our comfort is raised higher, for it was not an ordinary acquittance which was given Christ in our name, but what was drawn up by the spirit of truth; who can speak nothing but truth; God himself justified himself in our Nature, by his own spirit, such an infallible witnessse cannot be questioned. And though by spirit be meant his God-head in general; yet it is specially meant of that person which is the spirit. Therefore the Apottle *John*, *John* 1. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. reduceth all to this, *that it was the spirit that bears witness to this, that life is in Jesus Christ; Christ came by water and blood saith he, but Christ is the Spirit that bears witness to this.*

There were two things which did justify Christ, and both done by the spirit; his resurrection

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rection and aſcenſion into Heaven, in that he roſe again; it was clear that he was juſtified, for elſe he could not have riſen, if he had not ſatiſfied, the bands of Death would have held him faſt in the Grave, but that he can raiſe from the dead, *he was declared to be the Sonne of God with power, but ſtill by the holy ſpirit, Rom. 1. 3.* And in that, he by the ſpirit was carried up unto his Fathers glory, and ſate down at the right hand of God. It clearly did ſhew, he was accepted and freed by God, from that which was laid on him. Therefore Chriſt ſaith, that this ſhall be one of the great things which the ſpirit ſhall convince the world of, viz. *Of righteouſneſſe, becauſe I go to my Father, John 16.* That is, that there is a compleat righteouſneſſe obtained, and juſtification, or elſe I had never been admitted into my Fathers preſence; and all this acted by the ſpirit.

And as a further evidence of this, as ſoon as ever he was aſcended, he powrs down the ſpirit as a flood on his Apoſtles, and the Saints with them, and to demonſtrate, that he was not only accepted in his own perſon, and he perſonally juſtified in him, and now grace and life muſt neceſſarily run out upon them. In all theſe acts Chriſt was juſtified in the ſpirit for the comfort of believers. *Acts 2. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.*

Now how may your souls triumph and rejoyce in your justification, in the thoughts of this, that Christ, yea God was justified for you; and however you are in your selves, yet you may be justified in the spirit; beleevers have nothing to doe, but to take out the personal assurance of this to their own souls; at that time when Christ was justified, you were vertually so, and yet but out of the parricular discharge by the spirit to your hearts, and your justification is compleat. The great complaint of souls is in this, that they are not justified in God's eyes: But now, we are not only acquitted by the spirit in our own hearts, but God himself is justified in our Nature for us; there is none to offend but God, and none to be justified but sinners. But now, when God shall satisfie himself, and justifie himself in our persons, or in our stead; what strong consolation have we, God will not lay the payment on us, but himself, and he will justifie himself for us.

It was more for Christ to be justified, then for any one of us; for he had more laid on him, then can be laid on us, he standing not under the charge of one persons sins, or many, but of all the Elect; and when he was justified, a full discharge was given for all that he represented. This is a mystery indeed, God

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is offended, and God takes that on himself in our Nature, which lay on us, and is justified for us. When Christ was justified, there was a publick record of it; and now when we beleeve, we go but to that Court, and take out the particular discharge to our own souls, Christ receiv'd the first act on himself in our Name, and it was as authentique as if it were formally done on our persons; But when we beleeve, it is done personally to us. So that now beleevers, you have nothing else to doe but apply that righteousness, which issued forth from Christs justification, and lay hold on it as your own: Go to the Court, and see your own names in the Indenture, and get out the copy of it in your own heart; for there is a necessity, if Christ be justified, that we should be discharged; therfore get holy and glorious triumphs in your heart, over sin and Death, in that, Christ is not only dead, but alive, and that you are justified in him; get out the special assurance of it, by the spirit to the hearts.

3 Use. If Christ were justified in the spirit, Let it be your care to justifie Christ in your spirits. God hath discharged him, so do you.

Q. How can we justifie Christ, you will say?

S. Why, when you beleeve what he hath been

done for you; Christ hath done all things for you, satisfied wrath, fulfilled the Law; God hath acquitted him, pronounced him just, saith he is contented, he can desire no more; why now do you justify Christ in this, by saying Amen in your own Consciences to this. Hath Christ dyed? believe that your sins shall dye, Is he justified? believe that so are you. When the surety hath paid the debt, the principal as well as the creditor, ought to give an acquittance.

Oh how are we to be blamed for our unbelief; what aspersions doth it cast on Christ, he hath done all things well, but we say by unbelief, he hath done nothing. Unbelief professeth Christ is not dead, or at least not risen; the Law is still in force, justice is not satisfied, there is no justification procured: Every doubt in a Saint, casts a scandal on Christ; God saw cause enough to justify Christ, even by his own spirit, and to declare him in our names, to be a righteous one, and we in him; but we see not cause to believe our own justification, or the remission of our sins; what is it, but to think that Christ is held under the pains of death, hath not done any thing to purpose, that the wrath of God is as open to destroy us, as ever it was.

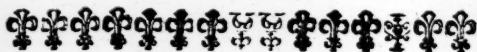
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under condemnation, when you believe not ; Oh souls , will you not justifie Christ in all these glorious things he hath done for you.

Then you justifie Christ, when you acknowledge him to be what he is made of God to you, wisdom and righteousness; sanctification and redemption. I might go through all his Offices and Acts for us ; as then we justifie him in regard of his death, when our hearts are satisfied with the offering up of himself, and that satisfaction he hath made. So in his resurrection, when we believe we are freed from our sins, our surety being risen for our justification ; so in regard of the whole work of salvation, we justifie Christ when we go to him as a full and compleat Saviour, having our conscience quieted by his righteousness, and our hearts triumphing thorough his fulness : Oh it is sad to see how Christ is crucified again in our hearts, thorough unbelief, arraigned as a malefactor ; for this is certain, if there be not enough laid in for the satisfying and enriching of souls, then Christ is not righteous, and he is under condemnation : How should we rejoyce to witnesse to Christ faithfulness and righteousness. When we go boldly to God by Christ, then we acknowledge Christ to be a Mediator ? when we find the sense of our

justification in our own hearts, then we acquit Christ, and declare he was justified from our sins.



SERM. VII.

1 Tim. 3. 16.

Seen of Angels, &c.

Great mysteries have great admirers ; according as things are in themselves so they are adored. Godliness is the greatest mystery that ever was, (it being made up of various workings of the glory of God ;) and it hath the greatest and most glorious Creatures for to study it, even the Angels themselves. This is one of the particulars whereby the Holy Ghost sets forth the greatnesse of this mystery , that it was seen of Angels. The two former expressions set forth this mystery in its nature, and essence, under a twofold consideration of God , as *manifested in flesh*, and *justified in spirit*: But this

this sets it out in regard of the outward effect it had on the highest Creaturers, it was the object of their admiration; not that this is part of the mystery it self, but an expression which the Apostle puts in, in the midst of all, to raise our thoughts of it, because Angels did look into it, and adore it; that we may therefore open this, we will consider,

1. What this mystery was which Angels saw.

2. What is meant by this sight, or how they may be said to see it.

3. How it doth magnifie this mystery.

For the first; the mystery which is here held out as the object of Angels sight, is none other than Jesus Christ acting as a Mediatour for poor sinners, concerning whom all these expressions are; Christ being a visible God in the world, *God manifest in flesh*, a full justification for his Elect; all the working of this mystery was in the Person of the Lord Jesus, and he is the sum and substance of all, the Apostle brings not any thing as a part of this mystery which was done meerly in God, which lay in his own heart, and were immanent acts of his Nature, such as Election, Predestination, and the like; but only of the way or contrivance of this as it was acted in the Person of Jesus Christ,

who was God in our flesh; all these things are included, and implied in this discovery; it is Jesus Christ who is the mystery that was presented to the eyes of the Angels as the most glorious object for their sight, God as in our nature dying, and satisfying, and being justified for poor sinners, this mystery was seen of Angels; that is,

2. (ὠφθῆν) *seen*, it is not meant of a bare sight, but of a sight which astonished the understanding, and takes up the heart, else it had been a poor expression to raise the glory of this mystery, that Angels saw it; but it was so great and wonderful, that they took the greatest delight to behold it, it was that which they were ravished in beholding, as at some new and strange object, as we use to say of some wonderful apparition, it was seen by such and such, that is, they were happy to behold it, exceedingly taken with it; therefore the Apostle Peter, when he would express the glory of this mystery, saith, the Angels do desire to look into them, 1 Pet. 1. 12. (ἐπιθυμοῦσιν) their whole spirits were taken up with this; it was to them as the blessedest sight that they could ever behold; so that the meaning of this, that he was seen of Angels, is this, that Jesus Christ, who was to act out the peace and comfort of the Saints, was discovered to the

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the Angels, and the lookt on him as so great a mystery that they could not look off, but stand and admire it. So when Jesus Christ was born, there was a heavenly host of Angels praising and admiring God for this discovery, *Luke 2. 13, 14.* leaping for joy but to bring the news of him to the world, you have no such expressions of the joy of all the world besides, as they took but in the seeing and manifesting this great mystery. But,

3. Well may this be brought in to advance the greatnesse of this mystery in our eyes, that it was seen of the Angels; Angels who are creatures of the highest order, who are of the finest make, of the noblest spirits, who behold the face of God himself, and are taken up with the immediate enjoyments of his fulnesse; for them to look into this mystery, as if nothing else were worthy of knowledge besides; as if the face of God himself were not so sweet, nor so taking, and satisfactory, (excuse the expression) but they must see this mystery as the top of their knowledge, and that which went beyond all their other enjoyments; and which is more, this being a design not so principally concerning them, they being in it as afar off, and in general; but being a mystery of the salvation of sinners, y.^e that
Angels

Angels should prefer this to all their sights, and sit down viewing this Christ before all their own proper happiness, how doth it swell up the glory of this design? Thus you have the meaning of the words in the general opened, I shall draw up the scope of it more particularly in this Doctrine.

Deñ. That Jesus Christ in the mystery of the Gospel is the object of Angelical vision and admiration.

The things of the Gospel are not common or shallow things, but that which the blessed Angels have their divine spirit taken up in the adorning of. Sight in Scripture is put to expresse the inward motions of the affections; *Joh. 1. 14. We saw his glory as of the only begotten Son of God, &c.* that is, we were taken with him as with God himself. So *Paul* useth the same expressions, *Gal. 1. He was seen of me also, (ὡφθῆναι ὑπό μοι)* speaking of that glorious sight which he had of him, which converted him, and for ever took his heart with love to him. So here (*seen of Angels*) that is, Angels behold the glory of this mystery, and were taken up with it, as the greatest joy of their hearts.

For opening this. Seeing the Apostle puts so much upon it, as to put it in one great expression to open the greatnesse of the mystery

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mystery of Godlineſſe ; that it was ſeen of Angels, I ſhall propound theſe things to handle.

1. What ſight the Angels have of the myſtery of the Goſpel.
2. How they come to the knowledge of it.
3. That this is a myſtery, that Angels ſhould come to ſee this Chriſt.
4. What is in this myſtery, that ſhould ſo affect them.

For the firſt. Angels being creatures of a ſpiritual Nature, are vaſt in knowledge, they having no bodies to cloud their apprehenſions, but are *puræ intelligentiæ*, ſee things nakedly, as they lie in themſelves, yet their knowledge is imperfect, being creatures, they know not all things which God knows, though they know all that is made. Now for their ſight of Chriſt in the myſtery of the Goſpel ; doubtleſſe they ſee much into it ; for they are ſaid to bring the firſt newes of it, to wait on Chriſt in this myſtery, to comfort him in his ſufferings, to adminiſter cordials to him, in theſe fainting fits of his paſſion ; they ſate in the Grave to informe the woman and his Diſciples, concerning his Reſurrection ; when he aſcends up to Heaven, they come

to the men of *Judea* and *Jerusalem*, and ask them, *Why gaze ye here? Christ is taken up into Heaven*; and they spake further of his second coming; *He shall come again, as you have seen him go up*. So that Angels now know much of the mystery of *Jesus Christ*: They which have followed Christ from step to step, from the birth to the grave, from the grave to Heaven, must needs be acquainted much with these things, and not only a bare Historical knowledge, but a knowledge of the mystery of it. Only they see it not as a mystery in them. There is the difference of Saints sight of Christ, it is as acting all for them, and as a mystery within them; but not so with Angels, though yet they have some concernments in it, for they stand by this Christ, he is a head to them also. But this will be more discovered in the second thing.

2. How do the Angels come to know this mystery, whether it be natural to them, as such creatures, or whether it be conveyed to them by some other means. Some think that God did discover a model of this mystery and gave a glimpse of it to all the Angels, at their first creation, and shewed them who must be their head, and through whom he would act all his mind, even *Jesus Christ*, as in our Nature, which, when the reprobated
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Angels saw, they could not indure to come under that mystery, or submit to Jesus Christ; they liked not the sight, and so fell, and are now Devils for ever; but the Elect Angels (of whom we speak) delighted in the sight of this mystery, and submitted to the hint of this discovery, and so stood by Christ, and he was made a head to them, and they subsist still in him. But whether that be so or no, this seems to be clear, that this mystery in Jesus Christ, Angels had not the knowledge of it by their natural being, but as they had it by revelation; for this mystery the Apostle professeth, *Eph. 3.* It was hid in God himself, kept secret in his own breast, manifested to none out of God; before he was pleased in time to reveal it; they might see some probabilities of it, have some guesses by seeing of God's heart, that he was big with some rich design towards the creatures, but the mystery was hid in God? what it would be, and in what manner they could not tell, but by revelation, though they saw God face to face, yet they could not see this mystery in God's Nature; for it lay in his decrees and counsels, which the Angels know not, and it was a design from eternity, before the Angels were acted and contrived in God, yet this must be granted, that they had a manifestation of Christ,

Christ, as to that which concerned themselves as he was their head, and as they stood in Heaven by him; but as the transactions of it concerned us sinners with the mystery of it (which is properly the mystery of the Gospel;) they know not but by degrees, as it was acted, and are still capable of increase. When God had broken his mind, opened his counsels, in that first promise made to *Adam*, in renewing of the Covenant with *Abraham*, in the types and ceremonies of the Law, by all the Prophets; so they gathered out the meanes of it, and they got more by the birth of Christ, by his ministry; but there be two great wayes, by which Angels come to see much of the mystery of Christ in the Gospel.

1. By seeing the person of Christ.
2. By the Church, and the manifestations of Christ to them.

For the first; besides what they have seen in the action of Christ in this world. (formerly spoken of) which yet gave them abundance of insight unto this mystery, for the first preached the Gospel with joy and gladness to the world, *Luk. 2.*

They were the first Ministers of the Gospel, in the affirmative, that Christ was come, they preached more of Christ, then all the Prophets did

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did, and with greater joy, they were in a multitude together, praising God, and saying, peace on earth, &c.

But besides that, they now seeing Christs person in Heaven, as glorified, and he being the expresse image of the Father, that which expresseth all his heart, and opens all his cabinets, upon whom, all the glory of God to man is acted, the Angels cannot, but by beholding Christ in this consideration, know much of the Gospel from him, Christ being the Epitome, and summe of this mystery; but yet,

2. The great knowledge, Angels get in these mysteries, is from the Church, from the discoveries of Christ to the Saints. That place of the Apostle, deserves to be opened to this purpose. *Eph. 3. 1, 2.* where it is said, that one intent of preaching the Gospel is, that Principalities and Powers, (names given to Angels) might know by the Church, the manifold wilddome of God. The Apostle had before magnified the preaching of Christ, as the opening of the greatest mystery, that ever was to be revealed, and to set it forth, he saith, first, that it was kept hid from Ages and Generations of men, and hid in God, laid up as the great secret of Gods heart.

2. He saith, that the Angels come to get
their

their knowledge of it from the Church; the opposition is this, that as it was hid from ages of men, from the beginning of the world; so it was also hid from the Angels; and as men have the knowledge of it by the preaching of it, so have Angels, only the Church hath first, they at second hand. The Church is the great subject on which all this is to be acted, it is that which concerns them, they are folded up in it, it is a mystery in them, as none have been privy to the first contrivance of this mystery, but these three which bare witness to it, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit; so none have the manifestations of it, so glorious as the Saints who are the subjects of it: The manifestations and openings of the mystery of the Gospel, are not properly in Heaven, but in the Church, therefore the meeting of the Saints are called Heavenly places, because there Christ makes his Heaven; and though the Angels see the mystery of it, as Christ hath acted it by himself, and in his own person; yet they cannot see it as it is acted on the hearts of the Saints, which is a new mystery, therefore it is called a discovery of the manifold wisdom of God; and the Apostle saith, *Col. 1. 27.* That the riches of the glory of this mystery, is Christ in us. There is a depth in this mystery, and such manifold actings of
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the infinite wiſdom of God, that it is impoſſible for Men or Angels to know it all at once. It was ſo vaſt, that God himſelf was fain to open it by degrees, to act it in parts, by manifold, and divers actings of his wiſdome : And all this to the Church. If a man will know the myſtery of ſuch an Art, he muſt go to ſchool where that Art is taught. The great things of Chriſt are taught in the Church, Chriſt reveals that there, which he doth no where elſe ; if Angels will ſee into the depth of this myſtery, they muſt go to ſchool as it were unto the Church. When a company of poor Saints are together, Chriſt ſtands in the miſt of them, comes down by the ſpirit, makes a throne, brings to light, glories that were prepared for them, before Angels had a being, kept warm, as it were in Gods heart all this while. It is ſaid, in (1 Cor. 2.) None knows the things of God, ſave the ſpirit, he only ſearcheth theſe deep things of God, none excluſively no not Angels. Now the ſpirit is only promiſed to the Church, and hath his offices on purpoſe in relation to the Church, and herein lies the exceeding glory of God, that he will diſcover ſuch a myſtery to his poor creature man, which he will make his higheſt creatures admire.

Thus you ſee how Angels get their knowledge

ledge by the Church. When Christ is preached, and his glory laid forth, and souls are taken into it as it were, why Angels come down, and listen, hold their spiritual ears unto the whisperings of the Spirit in the Gospel to us; and yet you must not understand it as if the knowledge they got by the Church were meerly a deduction of conclusions from principles, but when they hear and see the Spirit speaking to the Churches, and opening these eternal glories of God in Christ, they see intuitively into it, as we see when beams of the Sun on a sudden break out on the world, they are exceeding quick, and take it as by revelation; they catch up, as it were, the words that are spoken to us, and before they come to our ear they are in their hearts; for they being spirits know the meaning of the Spirit as soon as ever it is but revealed; neither is it to be understood as if they had no knowledge of Christ without the Church; for they knew Christ before the Church, and preached Christ unto them; but it is meant of the degrees and encrease of their knowledge in these mysteries; the depth of them is laid out before them in the Church; because the mystery of Christ concerned man, it was first revealed to him after his Fall, though but very darkly, and unto none else; and

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So now in the discovery of it in the perfection of it there be some things that God reveals to none, but those who are the subjects of it; As we know not the nature of Angels, nor their condition, though we know Christ because it concerns us more peculiarly: neither do Angels know all that Christ doth, and will reveal to his Saints. There is in the things of the Gospel the things themselves in the general nature and use of them, and the glory, and depth, the mystery and fulnesse of them; the first Angels knew long since that God should come in our flesh, and procure peace, and that he was justified in the spirit, and will save souls; but the depth of this mystery, the riches of the Glory of it, the several mysteries contained in it, they do not know, but as it is opened to them, and that by the Church; for herein God shewes, as his prerogative, so his distinguishing love, that some choice and blessed things of Christ, shall never be manifested out of God's heart, but to the Saints first, and none shall know them, but by him, in converse with them. As the mystery of Christ to the Saints, is a peculiar design, so they shall have the peculiar discoveries of it, and others by them. And the manner whereby they know things, by the spiritual species, wherein they are manifested,

feſted, and by the ſeeing of that glory which ſhines on them in their manifeſtation.

3. This may well be put in as a myſtery among the reſt, that God thus diſcovered, is ſeen of Angels; for it was a new deſign, that was carried on in the moſt unvilibleft way that could be; It being a myſtery ſo remote from their particular natures, they having no need of ſuch a diſcovery, and that God ſhould act a thing unknown to theſe high creatures, not diſcover unto them but at ſecond hand as it were, that the greateſt deſign of God, ſhould be hid from theſe creatures, which lay in his own boſome as it were, for ſo long a time; this is the myſtery which the expreſſion ſeems to imply. (*Seen of Angels*) And then when God had acted it, and laid out his glory in it, he preſents it as a ſight of glory to the Angels, that they might ſee and admire at what God had been doing all this while; this comes nigheſt the meaning, God hid it from them, until he had ſet up Jeſus Chriſt in ſtate and glory, and then ſhews him in a myſtery to his Angels, that they might fall down before him, and ſee the unſpeakable wiſdom of God.

To this alludes that phraſe, *Heb. 1.6.* When he brings in the firſt born into the world, he ſaith, let all the Angels worſhip him; God ſhews

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shews the Angels this first begotten of his love and wisdom, and they worship him.

As *Nebuchadnezzar*, to shew his state and glory, set up an image, that all his Subjects must bow down before : So did the great God make an image of himself in Jesus Christ, by whom he acted the greatest designs of his heart, and set it before the Angels to adore ; but,

4. Let us see what this mystery contains, that it should thus affect the Angels ; why, if it were nothing else but the manner of its acting, it were enough even to fill them with admiration, that God himself should come and assume flesh, and be one with it, taking the form of a servant, emptying his glory as it were, and making himself of no reputation. This cannot but astonish the highest apprehensions to do, the very outside intimates that this is a depth that cannot be sounded. It is a mystery of unsearchable riches, *Eph. 3.* In this dispensation there are all the riches of the great God contained ; It is a way which God hath found out to bring the poor creature into the bosome of all his treasures.

It is a mystery in which all the decrees, and purposes, and thoughts of the heart of God himself are acted, in which the manifold wisdom of God is most opened, whatever he

he hath been acting in all the world hath been but in reference to this, to set it forth; the choicest love in the utmost act, in the greatest variety, at the extreamest disadvantages, is manifested here; and as it hath been a casting, and contriving in God from eternity, so it will be acting to eternity, and there will be no end of it, new wonders of glory will be brought forth through it the longer it is look'd into.

And for what concerns their particular, they may well wonder at what God is about in this, when he passeth by the most glorious of all the creation, and acts out the brightest of his glory on poor sinners, and takes them up to an oneness with himself, and advanceth them with Christ far above principalities and powers, when they see such a design towards those so far below them, and which had never been so nigh God as themselves; when flesh shall be set down at Gods right hand; and exalted above all the glory of the Creation, and by that to let out eternal love, to manifest infinite treasures of glory; and all this over and above, and besides what God hath to bestow on them; how can the Angels choose but look about them at such a sight? But no more for the opening of it; we had need now to apply this, and reflect on our selves.

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are no more affected with Christ, and the mysteries of the Gospel; who can say that ever they saw this mystery with admiration? it is rather a mystery in this regard to us, that we see little of it that takes our hearts; Shall Angels see this mystery, and be so taken with it, and not we? It concerns not them so particularly, they are not wrapt up in it, yet are exceedingly longing for to know it; yea, cannot be content with a bare sight of it, but pry into it; Oh hearts that the Sons of men have, that magnifie no more this great mystery! God is come down among us in a mystery of mercy, riches, love, glory, wisdom, come to let out a fulnesse of all this on our hearts. And this is preached in the Gospel, & yet who looks into it? how few hearts are but ordinarily taken with it? who searcheth into it as to the blessedest Cabinet in the world; Christ is not as much esteemed as swine, it is sad to say it; men respect toys, notions, any thing before it; consider sinner, dost thou make little of that which hath taken up the heart of the great God from eternity, on which he hath set the highest design of his own glory, which Angels, creatures of surpassing glory, think it their happiness but to see, as it were, though they enjoy not? Oh how unworthy art thou ever to have a glimpse of it! Angels

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behold the face of God immediately, want nothing, are filled with immortal glory, yet they come down to the Church to hear the manifestations of this mystery, the openings of this Christ: They think they are not happy enough in heaven, but must know what Saints enjoy of this Christ, as if it were a glory above their attainments. There be two expressions to this purpose which the Apostle makes use of in *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. That the Angels desire to look into the things of the Gospel; the word for desire signifies the utmost coveting, or longing after a thing which a man cannot be without; Christ is so sweet and blessed an object, and the Gospel so filled with the glory of God, that these blessed creatures cannot contain without seeing of him; their pure spirits would fain be in the bosome of them, and leave their heavenly glory but to converse with Saints about the mystery of God in Christ: So the other word intimateth, they desire to look into them, (*παρακύψαι*) the word signifies bowing down, to pry heedfully and narrowly into a thing. It is used from the Disciples stooping down and looking into Christs Sepulchre, *John* 20. (*παρακύψαι βλέπει*) the poor Disciples did not more heedfully look into Christs grave, to behold their Saviour, than

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than Angels do to see Christ in the Gospel. So you have it typified of them, *Exod. 25.* the Cherubims were made looking down towards the mercy-seat, shewing how Angels should desire to peep into Christs heart, where the seat of mercy is, as if they longed to have one glimpse on them; Oh blush you hearts which have made so light of the concernment; of the Gospel!

Use 2. How happy are you who have had under the Gospell any manifestations of Christ, any discovery of this mystery to your hearts; blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; you have seen that which never eye saw which is naturall, and what the purest spirits see and wonder at; Angels envy not your happinesse, but they vail to your glory, they are not your corrivals but admirers; you have these sights laid before you, that Angels would leave their habitations above but to see; such dainties spread before you to eat, which Angels every day long for; certainly Saints are kept very high, that these blessed spirits long to feed with them, the leavings of your enjoyments they take up. Oh hath God discovered his love to thee in Christ, given thee a sight of his face in Christ, justified and sanctified thee in him; he hath done that for thee that Angels wonder

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at; know thy own happinesse, pry into thy priviledges: And if thou canst not wonder enough thy self, take in Angels to blesse, and praise, and admire with thee, they desire no better employment; these cœlestial, Seraphical spirits love to sing the tune of the Gospel most, they do service to the Church, administer to them, and all their wayes, as it were, is to hear something of Christ, among, and to know more of this mystery by them.

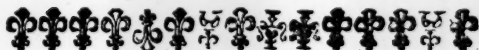
Use 3. Let your whole hearts be laid out in the studying of the mysteries of the Gospel, there must needs be some rich jewels in it of unspeakable worth, that God makes Angels to dig for, and above all things labour to see the *mystery*; content not thy self with any bare Historical knowledge, or outward apprehensions of it, but strive to be in the bosom of the enjoyments of them, and let no sight satisfie thee, but what is raising and astonishing thy heart; this sets out the worth of Christ, that he was seen of Angels; what, barely presented to their sight; no, they saw him with delight, with joy, they were rapt up above themselves, to see such a glorious object.

Consider it is a mystery, wherein your happinesse is included, your joyes, and comforts, and all your concernments lie in it as in
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ſo many folds. All the wiſdom and love of God is laid out in reference to the making of you happy; the Angels are but in it ſecondarily, as Chriſt is their head, that benefit they get by it, which is a high advancement, but Chriſts heart is particularly opened to you, and all his riches made over to you; and if you will not get to ſee much of Chriſt for your ſelves, to adde to your own joy, why get Chriſt opened to you, for the Angels ſake, that they may know more of Chriſt by thee.



SERM. VIII.

1 Tim. 3. 16.

Preached unto the Gentiles, &c.

YOU have heard of the *mystery of Godlineſſe* in the former particulars, in the inward nature of it, as it is acted in the perſon of Chriſt, and
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seen and admired by the Angels, you shall hear it, in regard of the outward manifestation of it to the world, As it was *preached to the Gentiles*. God would have all the creatures adore this mystery; therefore first, he presents it to the Angels, discovers the person of Christ to them, they indeed were the fittest creatures to dive into it, and be taken with it; but it is not only seen by them, but it is *preached unto the Gentiles*, discovered to the whole world, and this is the mystery that the New Testament is filled with, and that God would have took up all the time of the world to preach it in all Nations. Full hearts long for vent, and cannot hold, but must open themselves every where. God's heart is full of mysteries of love and salvation, and he cannot keep it in, but first he must shew it to the Angels, see how they would be taken with it, and must have it even *preached to the Gentiles* also, that they might be taken up into it; and this is also a part of the mystery, that God should let Angels see it and preach it abroad to *Gentiles*.

Yet observe the difference, it was but seen of Angels, they had but a glimpse of it, it was discovered to them, to raise their admiration, but not as a mystery properly for them; but it was *preached to the Gentiles*, proclaimed to them,

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them, as if God meant to open his whole mind only to them. Preaching being a set way of discovery of a mans mind, the great and set way, its manifestation was not to be unto any, but the *Gentiles*: This did swell up the glory of it, in the former expression, that it was a sight that the Angels were taken with, worthy to be presented to them, yea, and as that which was beyond all their attainments; what wise men and great men are taken up with the study of: and stand gazing on, we judge to be some strange and prodigious sight; they use not to lay out their thoughts on common things, or cast their eyes slightly on every thing, see what the Angels, these glorified, and metaphysical spirits shall look on with astonishment, and long to see, must needs be some supercoelestial glory, a mystery of the greatest depth and fulness; But this is farther, that this mystery should be preached unto the Nations of the world, that God should make the great declaration of it to such creatures, as a mystery for them.

This the Apostle may well call a great mystery; the summe of it is this; That the Lord Jesus Christ, as *God manifest in the flesh*, and justified in the spirit, and admired by Angels, should be preached to sinful creatures, and open himself unto them in the working of

his love and righteousness: this is one of the great mysteries of *Godlinesse*.

Here be two things in this one sentence, that make it a mystery indeed.

1. That Christ should be preached, that Christ should take such a way for the manifesting of the mysteries of his glory which is so unapt and weak to do it.

2. To whom he is to be preached, not to Angels, not to pure and spiritual souls, but to the Gentiles, that is, either first sinners in general, the *Gentiles* being the great sinners of the world; but especially to the *Gentiles*, in distinction from the *Jewes*, the *Gentiles* being the out-cast of the world: this is the proper meaning of the word here, though the other is comprehended in it; both these have a great emphasis; the Gospel hath but few words in it, but vast of matter, and fulness of emphasis in the expression.

I shall open them both, and set out the mystery in them.

First, That Christ should be preached (*ἐκνεύχθαι*) manifest this *Mystery* in a greater *mystery*, discover invisible glory, by outward expressions, the riches of his love and life should come out of the mouths of sinful creatures; as it was to be manifested to sinners, so even by these that were sinners, them-

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themselves, to have this treasure in earthen vessels, the way it self is a *mystery*. So the Apostle (1 Cor. 1. 21.) after that the world by wisdom knew not God, that is, by all their parts and learning, which they accounted the greatest wisdom, yet all could not bring them to know God: It pleased God by the foolishnesse of preaching, to save them which beleeve. It was a foolish way, and that not only because the world accounts it so, but because in it self it was a weak and unsuitable way to save souls by, that by the breath of a mortal man, he would break hearts, and breath in life, make souls beleeve, and build them up to heaven, by earth to convey heaven; for one by the outward expression of words to set forth inward glory, is but as if one would write in Characters for plainnesse; speak a mans mind in Hieroglyphicks. Now, that all the things of heaven should be opened in such a dark and weak way, adds to the *mystery*. God might only have shin'd out the glory and opened the nature of Christ, purely and silently by his spirit, and then it would be no *mystery* to conceive how things are manifested, but that he will have the spirit reveal them in outward expressions through the mouths of the sinners, to whom it must be revealed; this is a *mystery* of it self: if a

man speak a plain sentence in an unknown tongue, he speaks a mystery, so saith the Apostle 1 Cor. 14. he that speaks in an unknown tongue, is as a *Barbarian* to me, and I to him; just so it is here, for Christ a Heavenly man to be exprest in words and writings, and God who is not to be seen by any creature, seen in such and such words; it may well be put in the ranck of these great mysteries; if God had made use of Angels, as he did at Christs birth, to preach these things it had not been so much, they might have come in state, and proclaimed Salvation to the sonnes of men, have brought down the glory of Christ unto our eyes; and if Christ himself had come in his glorified body, accompanied with Angels, as he shall at the last day, such a way would not have been mysterious; but for Christ to be preached by poor men, to make that an instrument of the richest discovery, and to make words to convey life, and our tongues to speak Christ into mens hearts, is a mystery indeed.

Again; That Christ should be preached, that is, first an open way, it is the proclamation of a thing, what is preached is known of all, Christ would not have his mind hid, but preached to all the world, he would have every soul take notice of his love, and of his glory; he

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he proclaims it as on the house top; he would have the great mystery of the Gospel preached to all; let all the world know he hath a design of salvation on them; so Christ gave in commission to his Apostles, *Mat. 28.* when he sent them abroad to preach? go preach the Gospel to every creature, except none; I will have them all to know that life and immortality is brought to light. Christ is a general good, and therefore is preached to all; he would not have the things of Heaven be whispered in the ears of some select souls, but preached as on the house top, that if all the world will, they may hear with their own ears the voice of the Lord Jesus, as from Heaven, speaking mysteries.

2. It is a solemn way, as it is publique, so it is serious, that Christ is to be preached; It is to be the great work of Ministers to lay him out; the things of the Gospel are to be preached with the greatest solemnity that can be: Preaching is nothing else but men speaking Gods mind in their own language.

2. But that which doth indeed make it so great a mystery, is, that Christ is preached to the Gentiles; the word (*ἐθνῶν*) is used promiscuously, sometimes for to express sinners in general, sometimes properly; for all the world in distinction from the Jews, of the Jew first,

first, and also of the Gentile: these two names comprehending the whole world, I shall open them both, whereby you may see what a great mystery it is, that Christ should be preached to the Gentiles; that is,

1. To sinners, that the great discovery of this Christ, who is so glorious, should be preached and proclaimed to Gentiles, the worst of creatures in regard of sin. So the name Gentile is put to expresse all kind of sinners; therefore the Apostle when he would expresse the condition of the Gentiles, he calls them sinners of the Gentiles, because the Gentiles walked in nothing but sin, knew not God, *Gal. 1. 15*. So when the Apostle would aggravate the fornication of the *Corinthians*, *1 Cor. 5. 12*. he saith there was such fornication among them as was not named, (*iv εὐρεσιν*) among the Gentiles, that is, among the worst and most notorious sinners, such as the Gentiles were: Yet this Christ, and all the mystery in him, is to be preached unto sinners, not to Angels but Gentiles. That God should ever have a thought of good will to such, is above all our apprehensions, God being so infinitely displeased with them; but that he should make sinners the subjects of the utmost discovery of all this glory, terminate and center as it were his heart in them, and let them

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them know that which Angels admire and long to know, this makes up a mystery of it self: for God to make a throne, and set himself up in the fulnesse of glory, to preach and proclaim his own riches to some pure and unspotted souls, whose hearts might presently fall down before it, this were something suitable; but that sinners, who are the children of wrath, should be this design; all this mystery is to be preached to them as a mystery, to be acted only towards them.

Oh how much glory is in this! God is here preaching life, and reconciliation, redemption, glorification, and laying out himself in wayes of wisdom, righteousness to the worst of sinners; nay, which is more, God in this mystery is preached as the peace, the life, the righteousness, the propitiation for poor sinners; what is this but the mystery of free grace acted in infinite wisdom and love to such souls. The Apostle when he doth but think of it he cannot hold, *this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ came to save sinners, of whom I am the chief,* faith he, 1 Tim. I.

But secondly, as to sinners in general, so to the Gentiles; the whole world besides the Jewes; this is the proper meaning of it, respecting the calling in of the Gentiles by preach-

preaching, and rejecting the Jews; This the Apostle always makes a great mystery; the Apostle tells the *Colossians*, *Col. 1. 27.* that Gods great intent was to make known the riches of the glory of the mystery among the Gentiles. It was a mystery that this should not be preached to the Angels, but to sinners; but herein is a further mystery, that it should be preached to the Gentiles, not to the Jews. The Jewes were owned by God as his own people, he pick'd them out from the whole world, put the visible stampe of his glory on them, seemed not to care for the whole world, but they, let them sink or swim, they had the Oracles of God among them, the Covenant, Promises, Gods presence; But the poor Gentiles, out-casts, for some thousands of years left of God in blindness and darkness to serve Devils and their own Lusts, not a smile of God on them; yet for the Jews to be cast off, have scarce a glimpse of this mystery, but those Gentiles to be called to the riches of the mystery, and have preached among them, the Jews had the first offer and refuse of the Gospel, but they soon discharged it; and now for God to leave his darling people, and let them have but the out-side of the Gospel, the shadows of it in Types and Ceremonies, and the offer of the substance of it,

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it but in grosse as it were ; and for God to preach this Christ among the Gentiles , those whom the Jews abominated as sinners, strangers from the Commonwealth of *Israel*, and without God in the world, that these should be brought under the dispensation of the rich and precious mystery of the Gospel, may well be put in to greaten the mystery of Godlinesse. The Apostle in *Eph. 3.* when he would magnifie his Office in the Ministry, puts in these, that he was sent to preach to the Gentiles, as the highest favour and glory that could be ; for he saith in *verse 2.* that he had it by revelation : and he calls it a mystery, and a mystery of Christ, and a mystery which in our ages was not made known unto the Sons of men ; and he saith, it is now only made known by the spirit ; what is that which all this is spoken of ?

That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel, *v. 6.* That ever such a blind, miserable, forlorn people, among whom the Devils ruled from the beginning of the world, that they should have the promise of Christ made to them, and be fellow-heirs with the Jews, this is a mystery that the Apostle boasts of that he is sent to preach it, and therefore he goes on, as one that could not contain,

contain, ver. 8. *To me who am less than the least of all Saints is this grace given; that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; (Among the Gentiles)* there he lays the strength of the priviledge; as if he had said, that I should be sent to open the mystery of heaven to such a stupid and blind people, to preach the riches of Christ to these poor Gentiles, this is a dispensation, and a grace indeed. So in another place, *Forasmuch as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles I magnifie my Office*, Rom. 11. 13. This must needs be a great mytery that the Apostle thought it so high an honour, and such a peculiar grace given him, that he should but preach unto Gentiles; And in another place, the Apostle speaking of the manner of his call to this work, he saith, *Gal. 2. 8.* that the spirit of God was mighty in him towards the Gentiles, it was a mighty and great work, and the Apostle was mightily, and with exceeding actings of powers moved to it.

This was a new design, never expected to be acted, that God should in the latter end of the world cause the Sun to come into that part of the Zodiack it never was, after it had run its course three thousand years, to make a noon day in the remote and dark places of the world, and leave the habitable parts of it; that Christ should at last be preached in the fullest

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fullest riches of his glory to those who had not a benigne aspect of his love in such a time. Many generations of them went down to hell in multitudes, in droves, not knowing God or Christ; never dreaming of a Saviour, and now for the Lord Jesus to come and set up his throne among them, open the most precious Cabinets of his love and riches to these poor creatures, here is a mystery indeed. It was prophesied of Jesus Christ, and put down as one of the blessedest ends of his coming, wherein he should be most glorious. *He shall be a light to the Gentiles, Isa. 42. 6.* Herein lay the glory of Jesus Christ in the Gospel, that he should be set up as a Sun to enlighten the darkest part of the world. Nay, yet further, none ever thought that Christ should have been preached to them; for when he first called his Disciples, sent them abroad to preach, and gave them a Commission to go into every City and preach peace, *Mat. 10. 5.* He makes a particular exception, and gives a special charge, *Go not into the way of the Gentiles*; as if he had said, Go any where but among them, there is no peace to be spoken to them, as they have been miserable, so they shall be. And yet at last for the richest discoveries of peace and love to be made to them, Christ preached only to them, this is the mystery,

stery, those which were no people to be made a people; for God to be found of those which sought him not, is a wonder.

This is that paradox by which the Apostle aggravates the Jewes condition; Rom 9. 30, 31. *What shall we say then, that the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness have attained unto righteousness, yea even the best righteousness, that which is of faith: But Israel which followed after the Law of righteousness hath not obtained it.* The Gentiles they never sought after righteousness, they never minded such a thing, yet obtained it; Christ came to be a righteousness to them, and left the Jews, who sought to be righteous by their own works and endeavours without righteousness. The newness and strangeness of this, that Christ should be preached to the Gentiles equal with the Jewes, and be brought into the same priviledges, and of the same body, was that which stumbled the Jewes, even against Christ himselfe, they thought it could not be possible that such a generation should ever be looked on by God, or ever taken into Covenant with him. The Apostle when he doth but think of the greatness of this mystery, that Christ should be preached to the Gentiles, and the Jewes cast off, cries out, *Oh the depth of the riches both of*
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the Wiſdome and Counſell of God, how unſearchable are his judgments, &c. Rom. 11. 33. As if he had ſaid, here is a contrivance of wiſdome, and a depth of mercy and love indeed, that God hath ſhak'd off his old friends, and taken in ſtrangers, to be teachers of all his riches.

Thus you have the ſumme of what this ſentence holds forth, and the opening of a great mystery; the Goſpel, which opens the mystery of God, is in it ſelf a mystery, in regard of the manner and object of its manifeſtation. The former two expreſſions hold forth what the mystery is, with the glory of it; this is the way of the manifeſtation of it with the perſons, to whom, it is by preaching, and unto the *Gentiles*; and this likewise goes to make up the greatneſſe of the mystery it ſelf. But I ſhall rather make uſe of it, then open it further.

I Uſe. If this be ſo, it may inform us, firſt, how open the heart of God is towards us; he cannot contain his love and grace within himſelf, it is ſo vaſt and ardent, he cannot keep his own counſels that are for our good, but muſt manifeſt it to us, and that in the openeſt way, preached and proclaimed, all the mysteries of the Goſpel, though there be ſo much of the glory of God in them, yet they

they are not hid, Christ is laid out to open view. God keeps nothing hid, he will have it preached, let every poor soul know this, that though all the things in the Gospel be secrets in themselves, yet he will have them opened, he is not shie of speaking any thing, which may be for your good : Heaven is opened, God's heart is proclaimed to sinners. Thus light and immortality is brought to light by the Gospel, God hath set all his glory out in the light, that men may see how they like them, what they are worth, none shall be cosen'd with Christ, they are brought to light, Heaven is brought home to your own doors, you need not go out to seek righteousness, it is brought to you, peace Preached to every house. Christ will have nothing of his love kept back, he will have all known what he is, and what he hath done ; *go preach the Gospel to every Nation*, except none, and preach not only this and that, but preach the Gospel ; what ever may bring joy and gladnesse to poor souls ; go to them. Christ preached to the *Gentiles*, what is it but this, that he would have all his glory laid out before them ? Oh Brethren, how cheap are the mysteries of the Gospel ! you may have them for taking, you may know them, if you will lend an ear to them ; the word is

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is nigh thee, even in thy mouth ; Christ is proclaim'd in the streets. Oh what love is in this, that God should manifest Christ and his deepest mysteries to us, by such a familiar and sweet way ! to tell his mind to us, by such a course medium ! open his heart to us ! by our own mouths, it doth manifestly demonstrate to us, how willing he is, that we should know all his heart. Let me therefore exhort you, to come and buy milk without money, Christ is laid open for every mans good, he is for every mans penny ; Christ deals not underhand with you, you shall see what you buy, he is not shie nor close in his spirit, but is preached to you. What doth the Gospel say ? but here is Christ, as wisdom, righteousness, &c. Take him, and do what you will with him : Preaching is but a declaring this, that life and light is in Christ for you, that eternal love waits for you ; that what ever may do you good is provided for you. Oh will souls now refuse Christ, when he is brought to their very ears, they may hear him speak of his riches, and glory, and love to them : Oh neglect not so great salvation.

2. It informs us, what is the work of Ministers, to preach Christ to open the mystery of the Gospel, to sinners ; what ever
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men preach besides Christ, is but by the bie, the great duty is to lay out Christ. Ministers must draw out Christs blood freely; let the Gospel be preached as it is discovered, without any limitation of mercy and love, without any exception of souls from Christ.

3. It informs us, to whom Christ must be preached, unto sinners, not only Saints, but sinners; unto *Gentiles*, who were the worst of sinners. *Christ* must be laid out before the eyes of sinners, offered to sinners, as sinners, in their lowest condition, notwithstanding all their vilenesse.

But it may be some may stumble at this, therefore I would clear it up, that sinners are the proper subject, to whom the Gospel must be preached, without any qualification, but beleiving and laying hold upon Jesus Christ. Christ is to be first offered unto sinners, under no other consideration but as sinners; when it is said here, that this mystery was preached to the *Gentiles*, what is the meaning of it, but life and salvation was preached, that is, offered to them.

Christ must be preached according to the end and intent of his death, and of his offices; now *Christ* dyed for sinners, for the ungodly, he came on purpose to save sinners, therefore he must be offered first to sinners, as such as

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he suffered for. He dyed not for such and such sinners so humbled, so qualified, but for sinners absolutely to take away their sin. When we preach Christ, what do we declare but Christ as dead, and risen again, for life to sinners.

And the truth is, men are capable of the Gospel, under no other notion but as sinners; for it offers righteousness and free justification, reconciliation and redemption, which respects purely sinners; none need Christ but only such, a righteous Christ is for a sinful creature.

When Jesus Christ comes to any soul, he finds him ungodly, and yet justifies him; though this is still to be taken in, though Christ be to be preached unto sinners, yet none but such and such sinners do receive him, or beleeve upon him, whose hearts he moves, and makes see the need of him; though Christ belongs to sinners, and came into the world on purpose to save them, yet these sinners which he doth save, he convinceth and humbleth, and makes beleeve; yet we must preach Christ, according to the true intent, and proper end of Christs mission and commission, which was to save sinners, and if men beleeve not, and are not sensible of their need, and want of Christ, we must shake off the dust of our feet.

Use 2. If this be so, then let no sin discourage thee from beleeving, and going to Christ, Christ is given to thee, on no other terms, then as thou art a sinner, and he a Saviour; let thy condition be what it will, it cannot be worse then the *Gentiles* was: what if thou hast lived long in sin, hast been a stranger from God, yea, worshipt the very Devils as they did? Christ and all the mystery of the Gospel is to be preached to thee, and if preached, thou mayest beleeve. Let all the world know, that grace is not circumscribed, that Christ is not dainty of his love. We are commanded to proclaim peace, even to those which are afar off, even cursed *Gentiles*. Oh except not your selves out of the terms of the Gospel, when the worst of sinners may come and be welcome to the richest things of Jesus Christ, yea, to drink of Christ's own heart blood. What a sad thing is this, that thou shouldest be more shie of Christ, then he of thee; what is Christ but a Saviour? for whom hath he done all for, but for sinners, such as thou art? suppose but any righteousness in thy self, or any thing but sin, and thou layest a ground-work of destroying the end of Christ's coming: If thou hast no sin, God hath done nothing for thee; if sinne hinder thee from Christ, it is, because thou knowest

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knoweſt not what Chriſt is made for thee. We can do no more then preach Chriſt to the *Gentiles*, offer him as a full and compleat Saviour for ſinners, and if you being ſinners, keep you from Chriſt, it muſt be, becauſe you think not Chriſt to be a Saviour. We have commiſſion, not to over-heat Chriſt's blood, but give it to ſouls, as they can take it ; and I here profeſſe this day, that if thou be a *Gentile*, the verieſt wretch that ever the world bore, Chriſt is preached unto thee, and thou art one, who mayeſt have all the myſtery of the Goſpel diſcovered to thee. Stand not mincing of the Goſpel, make not critical exceptions againſt Jeſus Chriſt ; it is ſufficient thou art a ſinner, thou needeſt adde no more ſins ; and if thou be a ſinner, Chriſt is offered unto thee. I, this myſtery is a deſign of free grace, and knows no other objects to act upon but ſuch as thou art. Oh lie at Chriſts feet, lay thy ear at the mouth of the Goſpel, it ſpeaks nothing but myſteries of love and life to thee.

Laſtly, If it be ſo, here is a new object for your admiration ; that God ſhould contrive ſuch a myſtery, and manifeſt it unto us, that we, we wretched ones ſhould be the ſubjects of ſuch tranſactions, what reaſon have we to bleſſe and admire the love of God to us. Free

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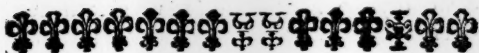
grace hath no bounds : It hath only wrought in Gods heart , but it breaks out to all the world, stands up and cries grace, grace to all the world ; how ought we to prize the preaching of the Gospel, which is a revelation of the mystery of Christ to us ; God could have revealed all this immediately to his Elect, and have made no more ado ; but he will have it preached, this shall be the ordinary and common way of the manifestation of the great mysteries of the Gospel, and those which cast off preaching renounce the way of God, whereby he will open his hidden treasures.

Oh brethren ! think what cause you have to admire that Christ is preached to you, his love manifested in such a way ; you have Christ taught in your streets, the sweet sound of the Gospel in your ears ; what should take up your hearts but this ? What better news unto sinners than to hear of a Saviour ? The Gospel speaks nothing but glad tidings to poor souls ; it gives out the spirits of life and immortality to refresh the soul. You that were Gentiles, Christ is preached to you, beleeve, and close in the Gospel ; lest it happen to you as to the Jews, that Christ be preached no more to you ; when Christ declares such great things, he looks for attendance, and woe to those souls that obey not such a Gospel.

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SERM. IX.

1 Tim. 3. 16.

Beleeved on in the world, &c.

THe *mystery of Godliness* is comprehended in two things: Gods actings towards us, and our actings towards God; of the first you have heard in the former expressions, how richly and suitably God hath discovered himself to the salvation of his poor creature, man; God himself personates us in our condition, and so transacts our happiness, and that we might have the comfort of it, proclaims it by preaching, even unto the Gentiles, the most forlorn and contemptiblest souls, and this is the right line in which the greatness of this mystery is conveyed; for that it was seen of Angels, is but collateral to it, to make up the glory of it *ab*

extra, from the admiration of such divine creatures, when they did but look on it; but yet his mystery goes on still in its greatnesse, even in regard of our actings towards it; and this is put in among the rest, to fill it up, that it was *beleeved on in the world*; the receiving of Jesus Christ, and beleeving on him, as the Author of life and salvation, and the righteousness, and redemption to poor sinners, is one part of the great *mystery of Godlinesse*, and that which is as much to be admired as any of the rest.

Let us first look on it, in relation to the other parts of this mystery, then consider it in it self.

First, consider it as with the rest, and it is one of the greatest parts of the mystery; for the acting and contriving of this in God's own heart, he had no opposition, all was done in light and glory; but when it was acted on us, there was the opposition, light and darknesse striving together; yet one would think this should be no mystery at all, for us to beleeve this which was so much for our own eternal good. Who will wonder at a starved begger, to take bread that is offered him? or for a poor prisoner condemned, to take a pardon? all the wonder is, that the man should be so bountiful, as to part with the bread out
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of his own belly, to give the begger, and that the King should be so gracious, as to grant the pardon to such a wretch; yet the Holy Ghost sets this down as an equal mystery with the rest, that Christ should be beleaved on in the world, which is no more, but that sinners should receive and entertaine that glory, which is let down from Heaven to blesse them withall, to lay hold on that Rock, without which, they are drowned for ever; to accept of that grace, which only can bring salvation to them, to give up themselves to be saved by the infinite riches of love and glory; yet this is a mystery, that ever this Christ should be thus beleaved on. That God should be manifest in flesh, to save such sinners as we are, why his own infinite love prompted him to it, he had a design of glory out of it, he knew what he did, it was an essay of acting out his wisdom and love, and that he was seen of Angels; such sagacious and spiritual creatures, is not so much wonder; for who was fit to behold such an object, but such blessed spirits, and that it should be preached to the Gentiles, may yet be conceived: For, God to proclaim it to us, and open his heart, was exceeding glorious, yet still this was God letting out his own love to us; but that sinners, who lie in darkness, know nothing

of God, should beleeve this; this is yet a farther mystery, and as great as any of the others.

But to open it more fully, that we may see wherein this mystery lies in this expression, I shall lay down these particulars.

It will be a mystery if you consider,

1. The condition which the world is in.

2. The nature of beleeving.

3. The difficulties, and disadvantages, to the work of beleeving.

4. The requisites to such an act.

For the first. That Christ should be beleeved on in the world; by the world is meant the *Gentiles*, unto whom Christ was to be preached. Now, the whole world lay in wickednesse, averse from God, scorning the name of Christ; the condition of the world was a condition of utter darkness, they were given up to blindnesse, and hardnesse of heart, they walked in the valley of the shadow of death, under the power of the Devil, ruling in their hearts, as children of disobedience, dead in trespasses and sinnes, Eph. 2. 1, 2, 3. What a wonder is it, for blind men to see, though it be the best thing which may do them good; for dead men to be sensible of a miserable condition, or of any thing that

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that lies upon them ; such were all the world running with full career to sin, and Hell, and will not be stopt, delighting in sin as their meat and drink, serving their lust and the Devil as their God ; men not only not sensible of their own estate, but hating the name of that which may reform them : Now, for such to receive and entertain a Christ, submit to the glory of the Gospel, must needs be a mystery : how such blind souls can see the light of the glory of God, such dead hearts entertain joyfully a living Christ, and be brought from death to life, from the power of Satan to God, be transformed into light and life, be taken up into glory, may well be put on the account of the mysteries of the Gospel, and add to its greatness.

But 2. What is meant by beleeving ? in general here Faith is put for all graces, and all the glorious workings of God in our hearts, beleeving being the first and the choicest grace, every grace in our hearts makes up a mystery ; and beleeving here comprehends all the workings of our hearts, in relation to the design of God in the Gospel, as the manifestation of God in flesh, and his justification in spirit, is put for all the work of redemption and justification, the foundation of it being surely laid in that, so all the workings of

it in our hearts, is summed up in beleaving : How our hearts should take in all this love, and be turned into it, and live in it ; this is a mystery indeed ; but especially , beleaving is to be taken properly for the Faith it self , which is nothing else, but a closing with, a receiving of, and laying hold on Jesus Christ ; now if you look into the nature of this Faith, you will find it a mystery, that Christ should be beleaved on in the world.

1. A renunciation of self.
2. A reall and full closing with Jesus Christ.
3. It is a receiving Christ on his own terms.

For the first ; That a man should renounce himself, and be nothing, it is the hardest frait that Nature is put to, self being the principle and end of all mens actions by Nature, and that which lies diametrically opposite to the mystery of godliness, for a poor creature, whose Nature and actiugs, can comply with nothing but self, to abjure it, and cast away all, yea, abhor and loath self, as its mystery ; what shall we think of this ? can it amount to lesse then a mystery , to see Nature not only to be weakned, but turn'd against it self, and acting contrary to its own principles ? As to see light things descend,
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and heavy ascend, and that against its nature. Self is the predominant principle of the world, it rules like the sole Monarch, and there is no absolute Monarch but self; it rules in the most noble natural breasts, and is that which is founded in the nature of things. But now, when a man beleeves he goes directly against natural self, he saith he is nothing, nor can do nothing; and not only is beleeving a denyal of the worst self, sin and lust, (which yet is as a mans right eye, yea, as the Caul of a mans heart) but he denies honest self, and religious self, self drest and adorn'd, self-righteoutnesse and actings, self adorned with the most glorious endowments, and richest performances, self natural and acquired; yea, and a soul contrary to all its motions; both rational and seemingly godly beleeves on Jesus Christ. Take a raised and high spirit, one who hath built his nest in the Starres, in regard of speculation, and one whom the world can say nothing in regard of converse unto; for him to come and submit to a Christ, to throw down all that ever he hath studied, as dung and droffe, to descend and come into the lower parts of the earth, and look on himself as the poorest despisablest, and undonest creature in the world; one that knowes not the way to happinesse,

(which he must do, if he beleewe) why this is the myſtery. Self is ſometime ſo painted, acted in ſo much ſtate, and ſo ſpiritualized, (as it were) ſet out with ſuch ornaments, both of nature, art, and morally ſpiritual gifts, that it would make any ſpirit in love with it; yet when a ſoul comes to beleewe on Chriſt, he muſt renoance all theſe as dung and drotte, the worſt of things, in regard of ſaving his ſoul, or in compariſon of Jeſus Chriſt. This is death to a man; Nature would as lieve be damned, as entertain ſuch a propoſition, and caſt it ſelf out of ſuch a priviledge, that it looks on as its birth right; yet there was no ſoul that ever beleewed on Jeſus Chriſt, but did willingly do this. *Paul*, when he begins to reckon up his priviledges, both of his birth and education, and the ſtriſtneſſe of his life, one would have thought he needed no more, *Phil. 3.* (and he thought ſo too) ſelf was ſo richly accompliſhed, not only againſt the Law, but the Goſpel; he was born in the Church, had the priviledges of a Saint, was blameleſſ in the Law; yet when he came to beleewe, he was glad to caſt away all this, as the off-ſcouring of the world; he was alive once, and thought himſelf a glorious one; but he dyed to all theſe, they were all as dead things to him. For a man, not only to deny his

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his lusts, that are his Nature, (and so dear, as many venture the wrath of God for) but his performances, which he hath been in for a long time, and throw down the glorious structure of duty, he hath been building for 20, 30, 40 years together, with all the curious paintings of formality : You had better tell men of parting with God, Christ, Heaven, yea, of all the good of soul and body, rather than of such a thing.

This self is the bottome and original of all sin, it is that which is the very constitution of our Natures : Self hath been born and bred with us ; it lives in our bosoms, hath been the old companion in all our actions, and to be cast off at last, and hated, is very hard ; it is easier to change the course of the Sun, and turn Heaven into Earth, to place the Elements above, and the Stars beneath, to make the stream naturally run back from the same Fountain it came, yea, to work the greatest miracle in Nature, then to make a man to deny himself, especially self so ingratiated and clothed with gifts and honesty, and righteousness of the Law. Yet when a man beleeves, this is the first thing done upon him, self is turn'd against self Nature runs counter to its own inclinations : that darling and first-born of the souls delights and love
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is made the abomination of the heart, and the soul most set against it. Now let this be weighed, which yet is but the first, and rather implicate, and supposed act of Faith, then the Nature of it, and you cannot but conclude, that this is a great mystery, that Christ should be beleaved on in the world.

But 2. Which is yet farther; for a soul to close in with Jesus Christ, and fully to rely on him as his own, and expect all righteousness and grace in him alone, and nothing from himself, first or last, (which is properly believing) this sets it out yet farther:

For 1. It is a great venture for a soul to forsake self, its dearest consort, and leave all its strong engagements to the flesh; for that which yet he hath no particular assurance of, but a bare tender and offer. No man in reason will part with any thing in possession, but upon a certainty of a better; whereas the soul is still in doubt of what it may enjoy, though Christ be offered to all, yet some go without him; and this may be the condition of the soul.

Yea, 2. To close in with Christ, against whom it hath naturally the greatest antipathy, and whom it never saw; to cast all the weight of its joy and comfort on Christ, whom

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whom the heart hath offended, and against whom it hath receiv'd such prejudices, that heart cannot endure him of any; this is exceeding strange unto our apprehensions. As *Abram* left all his own Kindred, and Fathers house, and not knowing where he went, binding up his reason, and denying a present good, only on the security of a general and indeterminate promise, was a miracle to all the world; for this is the nature of Faith, on a bare word and promise to close in with Christ, and venture its eternal comfort. Faith comes by hearing, and that of the word preached, that is, of the word of promise. Now, for a soul engaged thus to sin, and lust, and self, to leave all on a promise of a Christ, which yet, the soul is a stranger unto, and is dark in the knowledge of; this must needs be a mystery; and that

3. If you consider that it is not only a bare taking of Christ as at a shift, to make some present advantage of him, to rid a man out of fears, or preserve him from wrath, which self may be willing unto, out of its own principles; but it is a receiving Christ on his own terms, a submitting unto the tenure of all his commandments, it is taking Christ nakedly, with all his holiness, as well as his love, yea, with all his in-con-

inconveniencies unto flesh and blood, even to take up a Cross with him, lie down in the grave with him; it is a giving up the soul unto Christ, to be what he will, and do what he will; that a soul beleeves not only for peace and joy, but for power and life, and is led captive for ever, unto the will of Christ; therefore it is called the obedience of Faith by the Apostle; this must needs be a mystery, especially if you consider in the third place, the difficulties and disadvantages the poor sinner meets withall in the way, besides that natural darkness and stupidity which lies on our hearts, that we cannot judge of our own peace; and that averfness from Faith in us, above any thing else. There be these difficulties rise up, for a soul to leap over.

1. The greatnesse of sin, which when it is once discovered to an inlightned soul, is so great and vile, that it cannot imagine how it can be pardon'd, the Law pressing so hard for satisfaction, and the soul can give none; when it thinks of God, he is so offended it thinks, that he will never have mercy. The sinner is now put to it, in the full prospect of such a heart, of such abominations, to go to Christ for salvation, to believe all these sins, though so amazing the soul, and of such a damning Nature, to be all done away, and see
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more righteousness in Christ, then sin in it, this is a hard work.

But 2. That a soul should beleeve at such a time, when yet among all the rest of its sins, it hath such a root of unbelief within it, springing from the power of self-love, which keeps the soul under, raiseth mists before the eyes of the souls self and it, striving to evade all the arguments of the Gospel, to elude and baffle the soul, in all its apprehensions of Christ. Unbelief saith, there is no such thing as Christ, it is but a mockery, a delusion, or else raiseth up a dust before the promise, that the soul may not see it for him; it tells the soul, it is no end to think of pardon, thou art gone too far to recover, it is too late, or else lessens the riches of mercy, but multiplies the misery of sin: Thus unbelief, like a strong man uncontrouled, reigns in the heart. But which is more,

3. Sense and reason stand unsatisfied, the soul can neither see cause why to beleeve, nor find any ground in it self, that if it beleeve, it must go beyond experience, go contrary to its own senses, it feels nothing but the workings of deaths through sin, sees nothing but hell before its eyes, and a necessity of satisfying justice; it hath nothing visibly held out to it, but a general promise of a Christ, which

which unbelief evades; it cannot see reason; why God who hath been so highly displeased, can ever passe by such affronts, and take the soul into favour. Now, for a man to beleeve against his own sense and reason; as *Abram* beleeved against hope, and above hope, is a mystery indeed: To venture a mans eternal happinesse against his reason and sense, on such general terms as at first is presented to the soul, is the great wonder of the world; especially if we yet look further and consider,

4. What prejudices, and misprisions such a sinner hath of Christ. The Devil presents him under cruel shapes to such a soul, and unbelief is not backward to make hideous discoveries, as that he is not so rich, nor so merciful; one which hath, but will not spare me, which hath a flock, but no heart; either they think he cannot, or will not give what the soul needs. Christ lies remote from the eye of the soul, he is in Heaven, and they see not his heart, they must take things on trust, receive him in the promises, and that seems to be an uncertain way of assurance. That grosse ignorance of the Nature of the Gospel, or the person of Christ, is of it self invincible, and oh what conceits are raised up in the heart, against Jesus Christ. The soul

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soul will run to this, and that, rather than Christ; it will look to self, if it can find any thing there, which may give it but a little ease, (though it do deceive it) rather than go to Christ; it will court duties, and performances, Saints and ordinances; if any of them will afford but a spark of comfort to it, that it may stay from Christ; for self and sin cannot indure to hear a good word of Christ, the Antipathy is in nothing stranger.

Lastly, view the requisites to beleeving; what is required to make one beleeve, for it is above the power of Nature. Why?

1. There must a light from Heaven shine into our hearts. All the light of Nature and reason can never shew what Christ is, nor make a man capable of knowing any thing of this mystery; *The natural man knowes not the things of God, and it is impossible for him to discern them.* 1 Cor. 2. Therefore Paul when he speaks of his conversion, he describes it by a *light that shin'd from Heaven, above the light of the Sun*: He saith, *that Christ was revealed in him,* Acts 9. Gal 1. Thus to make any soul beleeve, he must have a spiritual eye made on purpose, and that eye inlightned immediately from God; therefore you shall find beleeving and seeing all one in Scripture, because Faith is a spiritual sight of the Lord Jesus. But

2. All

2. All this will not do, but there must be an almighty power put forth, even as in creation, to make a soul beleeve, so the Apostle saith, *Eph. 1. that the same power is put forth to make souls beleeve*, that was, to raise up Christ from the dead; the soul lyes in such darknesse, and hath such an enmity to Christ, that nothing can reconcile it, or make a soul have good thoughts of Christ, but to create a new heart in him, there is no dealing with the old heart, or working on it, it will come to no terms of agreement at all; for we are not only enemies, but enmity it self, there is not only in us an incapacity, but an opposition. *Col. 1. 21.* So the Apostle expreffeth it, by the casting down strong holds, imaginations, and every thing which exalteth it self against Jesus Christ, *2 Cor. 10. 4.* There are such forts, which unbelief hath raised in the soul, such strong holds, and mighty strange, and yet strong imaginations against Jesus Christ, that nothing but weapons made mighty through God, can cast them down. These strong holds are such as will never yield, take no quarter; therefore they must be pull'd down with a high hand; and there are imaginations, a thousand reasonings against Christ and the Gospel, which can never be answered, but they must be cast down.

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down. Chriſt muſt not only be fetcht out of Heaven in light, and ſhown unto a poor ſoul, but the power of the Almighty God muſt come with him, and caſt down all oppoſition againſt him, if all the Angels ſhould come elſe to perſwade the ſoul; nay, if Chriſt himſelfe ſhould come in his own perſon without this power, he could not perſwade the ſoul out of its Forts. Therefore it is ſaid, *None can come to Chriſt, except the Father draw him. John 6.* That is, none can ever beleieve on Chriſt, except God let out a mighty power, which may bring him. So Faith is called Faith of the operation of God, becauſe it is a work peculiarly, that goes through his hands, it is beyond all other power to do. To ſumme up all then, This muſt needs be a great myſtery, that Chriſt ſhould be beleieved on in the world; that darkneſſe ſhould comprehend light; enmity embrace a union; that ſuch proud hearts as we have, ſhould be content to go a begging to one we naturally hate; for a man to deny his ſenſe, reaſon, ſelf, righteouſneſſe, luſts, prejudices, and ſubmit to an unknown Chriſt, to be made nothing of, live at the finding of another. For this is the language of Faith; I am nothing, Chriſt is all, I cannot live without him.

In a word, there are the greateſt paradoxes

doxes in the workings of Faith, as any thing.

Nothing living, as if it had all things: unrighteousnesse making its self most righteous; a soul at the greatest distance from God, going most boldly to him, one which hath most offended him, most relying on him, a soul which hath nothing but sin, assured it shall have all grace, in the midst of greatest unworthinesse, triumphing in the compleatest righteousness: The greatest enemy made submit to the hardest termes to his Nature; with many such are found in the acting of Faith, that you see what a mystery is in this expression; *beleaved on in the world*, and how it may be well rancked in the number of these great mysteries.

Use 1. If this be so, then let shame cover our faces, that ever this should be reckoned up as a mystery, that we beleieve, that God should manifest himself to us, bring down his own glory to our eyes, offer life and immortality to us, and it should be a wonder for us to take it; that God should act in so much love unto us, and frame such a Fabrick of glory, to take us into it, may well be a mystery, who can expresse it? But that it should be a mystery for us to beleieve this, and to take God on his own word, so faithfully spoken, is our misery, though in it self a mystery.

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Must it be a wonder for hungry creatures, to eat the bread set before them, and for beggars to take the Almes offer'd them? yet the Holy Ghost makes this a mystery, that we beleeve on Jesus Christ. What should shame us more then this, that we have not a hand to take in our own happinesse, cannot swallow down a drop of the water of life, except it be poured in us? What an aggravation must it be of our sin, that we are harder to beleeve, and take in what God hath done for us, then for God to kill his own Sonne, and part with him out of his own bowels? we have nothing to do but beleeve, and yet it is a wonder we do beleeve. O strange creatures; God manifested in flesh, came in a sensible and demonstrative way, of love and glory, to wooe poor sinners, and yet they will not beleeve. Are you not yet ashamed? what, shall God present his own heart in blood to you, and yet you will not receive it. Christ is come as justification and righteousnesse, with peace and sweetnesse, and yet men will not beleeve; this is most unreasonable and wicked.

2. *Use.* Have not slight thoughts of beleeving, it is not an ordinary work; men think it is nothing to beleeve: If a man do but live under the Gospel, and have a general profession of it, he thinks he is a beleever.

Oh

Oh know Faith is the highest work of a Christian, that which is the acting of a mystery; if thou didst but know thy own heart, and see thy sin, thou wouldst wonder how ever thou camest to beleeve on Jesus Christ. There is a common Faith indeed, which the world hath, but it is not worthy the name of Faith, a Faith which is meerly hystorical and traditional; but for the Faith here spoken of, the Faith of God's Elect, that is another manner of work; thou wilt find it a mystery for thee to beleeve on Jesus Christ. It is an easie matter for men to say they beleeve, when they see neither sin nor Christ; but hast thou ever had but an aspect into thy own sinful Nature and a right knowledge of thy wretched state, then tell me, whether Faith be a common or an easie thing; it is that which many souls see it harder to act then remove Mountains. For a poor trembling soul, who stands on the brink of Hell, to leap into Christs bosome, and such a proud heart as thou hast, to be willing to be at the disposing of Jesus Christ, and make a total resignation of self, and all interest to Christ, yea, though thou mayest injoy them; this is Faith, and a great mystery, therefore deceive not thy own heart.

3. Use. Let us from hence see, what is the
great

great thing the Gospel requires of us ; it is to believe, all is summed up in this ; all the mysteries of the Gospel are nothing to us without beleeving. Though God be manifested in flesh, and justified in spirit, that is, made redemption and justification for us ; yet if he be not beleeved on by the world, it is nothing to us. Faith brings down the particular sweetness and comfort of all this unto us, and puts us in actual possession of it ; what ever God is to us before Faith, yet we have no benefit really by it until we beleeve. Oh therefore , make this your work, admit of no exception, against beleeving, this is the great duty of the Gospel, and the great way of Gods revealing himself to us ; it is a taking hold of all that Christ doth, and hath for us, and gives us the actual enjoyment of it. God requires no more of us, but that we beleeve the work is done really for us in Christs person, and this is preached unto us, and nothing else remains , but the putting to our seal by Faith, that all is true : The blood of Christ is drawn out, and his graces run out in justification , and sanctification, nothing is behind, but the laying of our mouths to his breasts, the stretching out of our hands, to receive in that life and righteousness which is purchased for us. Oh let not the work stick in

your beleeving doth as it were perfect the mystery of the Gospel. According as God hath discovered himself, so should we act Faith; the mystery of God in Christ hath wrought exceeding strongly; so should our Faith. The mystery of your salvation is opened, the materials of it made ready, and brought down to you to take, only your work is to beleeve, lay hold on them by Faith. God in flesh condemned, and justified in spirit, is preached to you, that you may beleeve. The blood of Christ is shed, and fitly temper'd for to quiet your consciences; only your mouth must be opened wide to receive it. Faith is nothing else but the eying of what Christ hath done, and taking it home to its self, and living in the mystery as its own. Oh now God hath done all so well, will not you set to your soul that it is true? By beleeving you witnesse unto all the other mysteries. The Apostle saith, *he that beleeveth not hath made God a lyer, because he beleeveth not the record that God hath given of his Son.* 1 John 5. 10. Unbelief belies God in all he hath done for us: Let Faith have no stop nor stint in its actings; suffer no contrary objections to believing; as the riches and righteousness of God are laid out before you, and demonstrated to your very senses, so give faithful witness

all by beleeving; the more you beleeve,
the more you get the ſweetneſſe of all this
fulneſſe, and you act in the myſtery your
ſelf; for not only Chriſt, but your Faith
in him, is part of the great myſtery of godli-
neſſe.

SERM. X.

1 Tim. 3. 16.

Received up into Glory.



WE are now come to the laſt ſtep of
this long aſcent, at the top of
which, you have the full ſight of
all divine workings; God ſeems
to begin low, takes fleſh upon him; and is
condemned; but then riſeth higher, and is
juſtified in the Spirit, and admired by Angels,
preached in power to the *Gentiles*, yea, and
beleeved on in the world, and now received
up into Glory. This notes the higheſt ad-
vancement of our Nature, in the Perſon of
Jeſus Chriſt. The great ſubject of this my-
ſtery, is Jeſus Chriſt, he is the center in
which all theſe lines end, the great and con-

mon representative of all the Elect; and he is
 set forth here, as under divers forms and glory
 conditions he past through, and the severa
 wayes of his manifestation to the creature
 as condemned and justified, as admired and
 preached, and beleevved on in the world, and who
 now at last, as received up into glory. And had
 it is no more then to set forth the three great
 acts which Christ did, as Mediatour for us into
 in transacting our salvation; he was manifest
 in flesh, to dye for our sins, he rose again
 for our justification, he ascended up into
 Heaven, to sit at Gods right hand for us.
 This is put in opposition unto his lowest and
 extremity of humiliation for us. He that was
 descended, also ascended far above the Hea-
 vens. So that now we must view this mystery
 as in another world, and follow it up to Hea-
 ven, where it is acted in glory.

The greatest part is yet behind, it seems
 now to be gone out of sight; as the Sun
 when it is gone from our Horizon, begins a
 new day in another part of the world: So God
 having acted that part of the mystery which
 was for this world, takes him up into Glory,
 there to act the rest in a new and blessed way.
 By glory is meant Heaven, where God sets
 forth his glory most.

For the cleerer opening of this, I shall pro-
 pound these things

I. Who

1. Who, or what it is, that is taken up into glory.

2. What it doth import and comprehend?

3. The mystery which is in it.

For the First; It is no other but Jesus Christ, who was God manifest in flesh, who after he had suffered, entred into his glory, having done his work, as the Apostle saith, *he entred into his rest*, Heb. 4. He came out of the lap of his Fathers love, into a wide and miserable world, to lead a contemptible and mean life, in the form of a servant, and having finished his course, is again taken up into that glory, and high dignity from whence he came. This was the prayer of Christ, that when he had ended his work in the world, that God would restore him to that glory he had with him, from the beginning of the world, *John 17*.

He left his place for a while, seemed to be turned out of it, as one not worthy of it, untill he should purchase it by his own blood. He was let fall out of glory into a form of misery, and lost his station for a while, and again is restored to it, with an addition of highest honour.

That this is meant properly of the person of Christ is clear, for the same is receiv'd up to glory, who was God manifest in flesh, and justified in spirit, who died and rose again;

that none of the Saints did, neither can any other be said to be seen of Angels, nor preached more to poor sinners, nor is any the object of Faith, leave but Jesus Christ; but yet this must be granted, that mystically, and representatively, this if all Saints likewise are received up into glory with him, as I shall shew anon; and if you will that Jesus Christ that in the names of all the Elect was condemned, and made a sacrifice for sin, and justified in the Spirit in their stead, that Christ is also received up into glory as in their stead.

But secondly, what doth this hold forth, that Christ is received up into glory? You must look on this as containing a glorious design, and a great part in the salvation of souls.

1. It implies a compleat finishing of that work he had to do for us here, that there was no more to be done in this world for us, that the satisfactory work to justice was finished, and he and his sacrifice accepted before God; *Heb. 10.* having by one offering perfected those which are sanctified; he entred into the holiest place, *viz.* heaven, and there sate down at the right hand of God, having no more to do, justice being satisfied, justification for sinners procured; this was evident when he rose again: For if he had not paid the debt

and he had never come out of prison; but much more evident seeing he is received up into Heaven, taken into the Fathers bosome: many would break prison, and walk up and down securely, if all were paid, but they dare not come in with the face of the Court and behold the Judge, nor come nigh any of their Creditors; this is the greatest ground of security that can be possible, that sin is done away, and that redemption is purchased, because that Christ is received up into glory; God would never have let Christ come so nigh him, if he had any of the smell of his grave-cloaths on him; had you left any one sin unsatisfied for.

2. It imports not only a bare satisfaction of justice, but clearly demonstrateth how infinitely God is pleased with Jesus Christ, and what he hath done, that his heart is contented, and he hath over and over pleased him; many a broken debt may be paid by a third penny, and composition, and the Creditor pronounce satisfaction in Law: But Christ did not agree so with God by way of composition, but Christ paid the utmost farthing that justice could command, and in such a way that God is infinitely taken with him and his Oblation, and so delighted in him, as that he thinks him not fit to stay any longer in this world, but takes him up to glory, cannot be without him

in Heaven, gives him a name above every good name; that he may ask what he will, he hath the command of all Gods treasures, of all his riches.

When Christ went up and down the world, and was but about the work, he could not hold on; but must send the Spirit to proclaim to all this to the World, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*; as if he had said, Whatever he shall do I will accept: But now how much more when he hath so faithfully acted out his will, and is received up into his glory; and is received up into his glory, is God pleased with him? It is said, that Christ entred into Heaven there to appear before God for us. As a confident Debtor, who hath paid the Creditor, comes into the Court and asks, who hath any thing to say to him, he owed no man a farthing, all is paid, let the Law take its course: So did Christ, he entred into Heaven as one asking justice, what will you have more for poor sinners? here I am, if the Law hath any thing to say to these souls which I have dyed for: have not I given satisfaction to the utmost? I here appear to answer in their behalf who cannot speak for themselves; Justice is silent, gives the acquittance, and God sets Christ down at his right hand; no place, no honour and advancement is too good

ever good for him who hath purchased so much: hatio that now a poor soul by faith may see a ll his charge indeed of all sin; do but think that Christ is taken up into glory, and there cannot orld remain a thought that any sin is unsatisfied holour; God is pleased so as that nothing but glory this to be expected.

an. 3. This imports a new design to be acted han Heaven for us; he is taken up into glory uch that he may act gloriously the second part of his our happiness; he acted one part in flesh, in d is the habit of a beggar cloathed with rags: He sed is now gone to act the person of a Prince in nto robes of glory, and all this to manage our us. salvation in the richest way that can be; he is he now gone to follow his blood, and to get all gs, into his own hands, that he may make ready to mansions of glory for us. Two great things he Christ acts for us now in glory, which is of to exceeding consequence to the salvation of our u- souls.

First, He is in place of an Advocate for us, *Heb. 7.25.* he lives to intercede for us; he is always begging of favour and love for us; he lies there to stop whatever plea may be brought in against us by the Devil, or the Law: So that no sin can come in to make plea there but Christ answers it with his old satisfaction; he is there to get out fresh pardons for new sins.

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Secondly,

Secondly, He is the great provider and carterer for us, against we come there he is laying up a store and stock of glory for us; he went before to take up Gods heart for us, and now is drawing out the riches of love from him, and laying it in bank for us; therefore the Apostle saith, *My God shall supply you wants according to his riches in glory*, now he is in glory, he intimating that Christs riches lie in glory, and now he hath the possession of them all. And this is that which thirdly is here so great a part of the *Mystery of Godliness*; that God who was *manifested in flesh* should be *received up into glory*; he who dwelt in glory, and was nothing but glory, should yet be represented as at a distance from glory, and said to be received into it; but especially the mystery lies in this: That Christ went not up as a single person, but taking up as a common person, carrying all the Elect with him; whatever was to be done on us was done representatively, and virtually on Christ as in our nature; he dyed as a common person, and was justified as a common person, and so now he is received up into glory he went not up alone; but though it is meant properly of his person, yet virtually, and mystically it is meant of all the Saints, they were all taken up with Jesus Christ into glory; not that they

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are ſo actually, but myſtically as in Chriſt their head. And this is the deſign, God coming down to us to bring us up to himſelf, ſetting aſide his glory, from whence we were departed, and then taking it up again, and us with him. It is no myſtery for Chriſt as God to be in glory, ſo he cannot be ſaid to be received into it; for he never was without it, but it is meant of his humane nature. Neither was Chriſts humane nature received up for it ſelf, but as it was a figure of us, Chriſts perſon was the great model, and firſt draught of all that ſhall be done to his body the Saints; therefore he is ſaid to be the Captain of our ſalvation that leads us all on, and our forerunner into heaven; he breaks the clouds firſt, appears firſt before God, and is glorified, then we follow; Chriſt wears the Crown in Heaven as our King, and he is united and married to God as our Proxy.

This is the myſtery, poor ſinners taken into glory with Jeſus Chriſt, God himſelf in our own nature is gone into glory for us. Chriſt is not only gone to Heaven to prepare a place for us, *John 14.* but ſits in Heaven in our room, and God looks on him as the great Picture of all that body, and delights himſelf in ſeeing them all glorified as in him. And even the Saints now are ſaid to ſit down with Chriſt already, *Eph. 2.* (*in ſupercæleſtibus*) in heavenly places, in

supercoelestial places. And as though now we be the Sons of God, we know not what we shall be when we come to glory, but that we shall be like Christ; so though we know Christ is gone up to glory, yet what new mystery he acts there, and how he acts out our salvation as in glory, we know not until we be actually taken up into the same glory, we have but hints of that transaction.

Use. 1. What a stately Tower have we erected for to see Heaven on? What a fair prospect have we of the heavenly state of blessed souls? Faith may stand on this mount and see it self in glory; it is like some optique glasses, which bring in all which is done without in the streets into one room; this expression opens Heaven to every beleever, and so fully that he cannot but see glory. Is Christ received up into glory? What is this but the investing all Saints with the same priviledge; your faith is led up very high to take in glory it self. Faith stands very lofty when it may both see Earth and Heaven at once, all that God hath acted for it here, and all that he will act in Heaven. Faith should eye Christ as far as he goes; if he be ascended, so should faith; if he go into glory, so should you also by beleiving Jesus Christ is lifted up, thus that we might be drawn after him; it is a great encouragement to us to think that

that Christ was dead for our sins, and is risen again as our justification : But much more that Christ is gone into glory, and hath carried all our names with him into the Fathers bosom ; believers should look on Christ under a twofold notion.

1. As one from whom all their happinesse comes ; as a head ordained on purpose to convey life and influence unto the soul ; one who is filled with all fulnesse to fill them.

2. As the plat-form and idea of what they shall be, and this is a high consideration, that Saints may not only have from Christ, but expect to be what he is ; look whatever God acted on the person of Christ, that he did as in our behalf, and means to act the same on us : was Christ crucified ? so are we ; as he rose again, so are we raised together with him, and if he be taken up into glory, so are we. Oh how should faith stand and gaze on Jesus Christ now he is in glory ; not an ordinary and mean act of faith will come up into this myllery, such a faith only as sets the soul in Heaven, and puts it in a condition of glorious triumph becomes his expression ; Heaven is not only opened, but possessed by Jesus Christ for us. Faith goes to Christ as dying and rising again, and so believes his remission of sins and justification ; but yet faith is low while it doth not go within the vail and

and see glory. Saints should not rejoyce in present acts, but live on future glory, as it was with the Jews at that time when the high Priest went into the *holy of holies*, (which was very seldom) how yet then they ought to have higher joy in believing, because they saw the utmost of their happiness represented then when merely they thought of it. So now that Christ is gone into glory, the holy place not made with hands, we should not only have a faith of justification, but of glorification; you may anticipate the condition of Heaven it self, and your actual possession of that by believing; when faith as it looks down and sees Christ on the Crosse, and his blood running out to satisfy wrath, it cannot choose but think that righteousness is procured, yet especially when we see him rise again; but now when we look up higher, and see Christ taken into glory, what can we have less than a glorious faith?

Use. 2. And now seeing I am fallen on this, I cannot choose but bewail our stupidity, and reprove our folly, how miserably do believers live? Where is the spirit of glory that should be on them? When *Stephen* saw Jesus at the right hand of God (though but for a moment) his face did shine like glory, *Acts 8*. How many are there that never came up yet to act faith in Christ as a glorified Christ? We are yet still in the

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 lori- below Chriſt who is received up into glory.

Uſe. 3. This cannot but heighten the joyes,
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 ill in hands, and that he is well pleaſed with you; for
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in this condition, he could never else have received Christ into Heaven: if there were any frowns left in Gods face, you might be sure Christ should have them, first he coming so nigh him; and if any flaws were in your pardon, or any exception against his satisfaction, he had heard of it, and would have been turned out of Heaven until he had made full payment; thou needst not doubt acceptance at the throne of grace and to find a blessed welcome to God, when Jesus Christ is accepted for thee, and thou comest in such a relation.

Secondly; Now he is in a capacity of acting out of his love, and the Fathers desire in the most glorious way to thee; Christ is gone into Heaven to do something more for thee still; he had some glorious piece to frame for the saints, and therefore left this world and went to his Father, that he might act it in glory, and now he is invested with all the riches of Heaven; he hath all the keys of heaven and hell, he hath all power to command, he hath received all the promise to himself, and all that he hath to do is to empty himself again on you; he hath not only got his fathers heart for you, but got all his riches to bestow on you; he cares not as it were for his own advancement, but only as it is the advantage to glorifie you; and now he can do what he will; when he came to heaven, the

re- the Father bid him sit down at his right hand
 any and take what he would, he would have no
 sure more to do with the world, but he should be-
 fo flow what he had among his Saints; this
 par- should be the reward of his death; all judgment
 ion, is committed to the Son, the Father judges no
 ned man, *Joh. 10.* he hath given away all his pre-
 ent; rogatives unto Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, As Christ is received up into glory
 to act for you, and to bring you to glory, so
 he sits in heaven to represent you; he is there as
 a publike person, and God sees you all in him;
 he doth but occupy your place, and imploy your
 flock before you come to years, all you must
 be gathered into his fulness, and received up
 into the same glory; he cannot be contented with
 that glory he hath until you be with him, then
 he still prays the Father so earnestly that you
 may be with him where he is, *Joh. 17.* that they
 may see, (that is, enjoy my glory) if Christ in-
 tended to resign up his place, and all his glory
 when once his Saints were come about him; he
 is but as Feoffee in trust with your estate; & how
 will Christ improve it for you who hath such
 an opportunity? And which is more, what kind
 of glory must that needs be which is the ho-
 nour and the happiness of Jesus Christ, which
 is his highest advancement as Mediatour.

Therefore every Saint should expect every
 sight

sight of Christ as glorious to wait on the Lord Jesus for glorious manifestations of himself, and in the next place expect to see himself in glory; do not only remember that you have a head in glory, who can supply your wants, but remember that you are there with him, and that his Crown is as it were a burthen on his own head untill it be set on yours; live according to the rate of such a mystery; ask of Christ communications according to his riches in glory; let all your actings be glorious, all your walkings, joyes, breathings, let them all be as in glory; view Christ, and see him as in that relation and condition, and you will soon have the sparkles of the same glory on your hearts; bound not your faith and expectations within this poor world, and the enjoyments of it, but ever and anon cast glances into glory, and if you will be in such an estate, you must get Christ that is received up into glory in you, as the hope of glory, *Col. 1. 27*. It is only as Christ breaks forth in your hearts by faith that you come to have such sights of glory; that glorified person that is now in Heaven must be in you by his spirit of glory, or else you can have no hope of glory; beleevers, you see your object, you know his person, never be quiet until you come into his condition; as you must go through all ordinances and creatures untill you come to Christ,

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Christ, so through all the conditions of Christ
till you come to glory.

Let us now view it in the whole as it were, as
t concerns Christ and the Saints together, and
his is the end of that, it is received up into
glory. As God in Christ was condemned in flesh,
o are the Saints, and justified in the spirit, so
re they; and at last they with Christ are received
up into glory.

Quest. Now the great question is, How Christ
and the Saints are received up into glory?

Sol. As for Christ, it is clear that he was taken
up in his humane nature; as he was God-man
in the world, so he is now in heaven, Jesus Christ
with as real body now in glory as he had in the
world: But it is taken into glory, and so a glo-
rious body, *Phil. 3. ult.* In any other respect
Christ could not be taken up into glory; for no-
thing wanted it but his humane nature: And so
must all the Saints be received into glory in the
same way, not only in their souls but bodies;
for the Saints have not phantasmes in Heaven,
they are not annihilated in their being, & made
in another essential form, but are taken into
glory in regard of the whole man as it consists
of body and soul. For that place in *1 Cor. 15.*
where it is said, *flesh and blood cannot inherit the*
kingdom of Heaven; therefore no real bodies
shall be there. It is answered, that the meaning
is,

is, flesh and blood without a change, as it is one a
 mortal and weak, not simply the being of flesh well
 & blood, but it is expounded in the same verse, lust a
 neither can corruption inherit incorruption, glory
 that is, no flesh and blood, as subject to corru- hat
 ption, as it is weak and sinful, shall not enter in: spirit
 For it shall be made a spiritual body, still a body, ong
 but spiritual and free from corruption, having ed ;
 a being of immortality put to it. rom

And this is so clear as it cannot be denied, glory
 except we will imagine a chimæra of a man ve e
 without soul or body; let this be considered, s fo
 whether the man that sinned shall not be saved, are r
 the same individual man; if the man, then cer- will
 tainly both in his soul and body, without which into
 he is no man, the being of him as a man lying in finit
 the *compositum*. And besides, the same that is T
 redeemed must be saved, now we are redeemed our
 in soul and body; but yet this body shall be atern
 glorious body, so changed, as that whatever s lit
 may denote weakness and corruption shall be o w
 done away; it shall put on incorruption. And you
 how strange is this, that the same man which is out
 justified, and sanctified, shall not be glorified. have
 But I leave that as the excrescency of the pride of t
 of this wanton age, who would frame a glory ble
 to themselves out of their own fancy. ve r

Let all us know, that Christ and his body piri
 shall be taken up in their souls and bodies to hin
 one

one and the same glory; and though now we
well in houses of clay, and walk in rags of
dust and ashes, we shall one day be taken into
glory. This should comfort us in all conditions,
that this is not our place, and draw out our
spirits to scorn this world, and to breath and
long after another fulness which is to be revea-
ed; the more high and aspiring our spirits are
from the world, and all enjoyments to that
glory into which we are to be taken, the more
we express our assurance of it. And this glory
is so great, that there is no taking it in, but we
are received up into it. Oh what a blessed time
will that be when the whole man shall be cast
into glory, lost as it were in glory as in an in-
finite Ocean.

Thus I have presented in a short view to
your eyes that which hath been acted from
eternity, and will be yet acted to eternity: It
is little hath been said to what might have, and
to what shall be really done. I have only shewed
you the things in a rude lump, let you see the
outside of inward and unexpressible glory. I
have glanced at that which will be the prospect
of the strongest eyes for ever; but alas, who is
able for these things? God must act it in us that
we may know it in it self; it is a work for the
spirit of the living God, who searcheth the deep
things of him.

I shall only in conclusion sum up all, and set out before your eye a small map of the whole contrivance of this mystery, that you may see what God is adoeing for poor sinners; the Apostle comprehends all in this expression of a mystery and a great mystery, and then lays it out in these particulars which are enumerated in this verse *God manifested in flesh*, &c. Here is a chain of the mysteries, the first end of it is tyed to Gods heart, and the other end's in glory; in the whole you may take notice of these things:

1. The plot and design.
2. The contrivance of it.
3. The way of acting it.
4. The effecting and issue of it.

The plot was to save so many poor sinners, who lay in the bottom of hell, and had so offended God, as that nothing but eternal wrath was their portion; the spring of this, & invisible wheels from whence it was acted, was Gods eternal love and goodness, that he might discover it freely to his creatures, because this design might go on glorious.

It was contrived that the same nature which sinned should save, and that the manifestation of God should not be until the time of the sin, and misery of the poor creature; and that the riches of love might be shown, wisdom contrived, that God himself in another form should act

fect out all our ſalvation. Thus God comes to be
manifested in fleſh, and calls himſelf Chriſt; takes
 up our nature, and joyns it to his God-head to
 the one perſon, and in that perſon dies, and
 ſuffers, and ſatisfies himſelf, and is juſtified as
 for our ſtead; he himſelf is made that to us which
 we were to be made; he makes that perſon for
 the glory of the tranſaction, a head to Angels
 and Men and preſents him to the view of theſe
 bleſſed creatures that they might admire him;
 and then, as a way to manifeſt it to us, makes a
 Goſpel which ſhall contain the ſum of all this
 deſign, and cauſeth it to be preached and pro-
 claimed to all the world; and becauſe there was
 nothing in the creatures at all to move him, it is
 to be preached freely, and that to the Gentiles,
 to the worſt of ſinners, without exception; and
 when theſe poor ſinners which have been thus
 bleſſed, they beleve on it, entertain it joyfully,
 are made one with this perſon thus ſet forth,
 if have all applied to themſelves, and then this
 de-perſon, and all theſe ſouls are taken up unto
 glory together, and enjoy the fulneſs of God
 himſelf; this is the Epitome of the myſtery:
 without every particular, as well as the whole, is a
 great myſtery, and paſt the apprehenſion of men
 and Angels to fathom.

The whole work of Salvation is acted by
 none other than God himſelf in ſeveral mani-
 feſtations;

festations ; first, in the person of Christ , and that in severall habits : and then in us and that in severall conditions ; but still it is God acting towards us, and acting towards him. God comes down from Heaven, and acts out his love to us in five various forms, and under divers considerations, and as he goes along gathers us into it, and then at last goes up again into glory and carries all us with him; he lets down Christ as a platform of his own love, and makes him act before our eyes all his glory, and then according to the severall out-goings of his love discovers him to us, & at last wraps us up with Jesus Christ into his own fulness : glory was the end, that was the condition which we were designed unto ; but God lets out this glory first in severall sparkles, and then contracts them all in himself again, and receives us up into it ; herein lie mysteries like mountains one upon another, and they reach up to the Heavens ; not a manifestation of God, but hath in it a mystery beyond all the apprehensions of the whole world ; love breaks out in a direct line, but as it goes along, winds up it self in such a variety of contrary and unthought of discoveries, as that it amazeth Men and Angels ; So that this is the total, God acting in Christ, and he in us, and both received up into his infinite fulness, which is here called glory.

Oh

Oh therefore to conclude all, let all your spirits be taken up in the admiration of these mysteries; what we cannot express, do you labour to enjoy, take not up your heads and hearts with trifles, ordinary, and low things, when you have such depths of love and wisdom to study and enjoy the sweetness of, think nothing worthy of a glance of your eye, or a thought of your heart, but this *Great mystery of Godlinefs*. And in all your apprehensions of the Gospel wonder not if you see not at first the glory and beauty of them, you must consider there is a mystery in every one of them, think not in a slight and ordinary glance to understand divine mysteries, they will take up the most serious and most sublime thoughts, and swallow them up at the very entrance on them.

Get the key of divine mysteries if you will open them exactly, that is, the Spirit of the Lord; sense and reason will never unlock the depths of such mysteries, he which will know the mind of God must have his own Spirit to reveal it. Four things are required to all knowledge: an Eye, an Object, a Medium, and light, the Object is supposed.

1. There must be an organ or capacity to see, though things be never so clear, no man can see without an Eye, therefore the natural man cannot see the things of God, because he wants

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an Eye; you must get a spiritual eye, a divine judgment; for, whatsoever is received in, *per medium recipientis*, your old understandings will not serve to judge of Gospel-mysteries.

2. You must have a divine light to shine on this Object before you can see it; Christ is in himself out of sight, and the mysteries of the Gospel are too far above all the light of nature and reason too, and therefore the light of the Spirit must be waited on.

3. You must have a fit medium to convey this light to your eye, and that is the Word of God in the Scriptures, through that word the Spirit shines, and opens the light and beauty of these truths to us. Study the Scriptures, wait on the Spirit in them, and you shall know the deep things of God; and I may adde this as the last, get the power and life of truth in your hearts, and then you will soon know the mystery; get your hearts wrapt up in the life and beauty of truth, and you will soon know the meaning of it.

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